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A
DRAMATIC READER

BOOK II

BY

A. R. HEADLAND

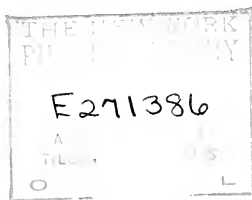
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H. A. TREBLE



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A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE

CHARACTERS

MR. BENNET

MRS. BENNET

ELIZABETH BENNET } (*daughters of Mr. and*

KITTY BENNET } *Mrs. Bennet*)

REV. MR. COLLINS

SCENE I

A sitting-room in MR. BENNET'S house at Longbourn.—

MRS. BENNET, ELIZABETH, and KITTY seated at work.

Enter MR. COLLINS.

MR. COLLINS. May I hope, madam, for your interest with your fair daughter, Elizabeth, when I solicit for the honour of a private audience with her in the course of the morning?

MRS. BENNET. Oh dear! Yes, certainly. I am sure Lizzy will be very happy; I am sure she can have no objection. Come, Kitty, I want you upstairs. (*She rises to go.*)

ELIZABETH. Dear madam, do not go; I beg you will not go! Mr. Collins must excuse me. He can have nothing to say to me that anybody need not hear. I am going away myself.

MRS. BENNET. No, no; nonsense, Lizzy; I desire you will stay where you are. (*Elizabeth moves as if to go.*) Lizzy, I insist upon your staying and hearing Mr. Collins.

ELIZABETH. (*Aside.*) I should be wiser to get it over as soon as possible. (*She sits down again. Exeunt Mrs. Bennet and Kitty.*)

MR. COLLINS. Believe me, dear Miss Elizabeth, that your modesty, so far from doing you any disservice, rather adds

to your other perfections. You would have been less amiable in my eyes had there not been this little unwillingness ; but allow me to assure you that I have your respected mother's permission for this address. You can hardly doubt the purport of my discourse. Almost as soon as I entered the house, I singled you out as the companion of my future life. But before I am run away with by my feelings on this subject——

ELIZABETH. (*Aside.*) Run away with by his feelings ! With such solemn composure as he has ! (*She hides her face in her handkerchief.*)

MR. COLLINS. I shall state my reasons for marrying. First, I think it right for every clergyman to set the example of matrimony in his parish ; secondly, I am convinced it will add greatly to my happiness. Thirdly, it is the particular advice of the noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness. This much for my general intention in favour of matrimony. My views were directed to Longbourn by the fact that, being as I am, to inherit the estate after the death of your honoured father, I could not satisfy myself without resolving to choose a wife from among his daughters ; that the loss to them might be as little as possible. This has been my motive, my fair cousin ; and now nothing remains for me but to assure you in the most animated language of the violence of my affections. Though that thousand pounds in the four per cents. is all you may ever be entitled to, you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married.

ELIZABETH. (*Interrupting.*) You are too hasty, sir ; you forget that I have made no answer. Let me do so without further loss of time. Accept my thanks for the compliment you are paying me. I am very sensible of the honour of your proposals, but it is impossible for me to do otherwise than decline them.

MR. COLLINS. I am not now to learn that it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept. I am, therefore, by no means discouraged by what you have said, and shall hope to lead you to the altar ere long.

ELIZABETH. Upon my word, sir, your hope is rather an extraordinary one after my declaration. I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness. I am perfectly serious in my refusal. You could not make me happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world to make you happy. Nay, your friend, Lady Catherine, would find me ill-qualified for the situation.

MR. COLLINS. Were it certain that Lady Catherine would think so—but I cannot imagine it—you may be certain that I shall speak in the highest terms of—

ELIZABETH. Indeed, Mr. Collins, all praise of me will be unnecessary. You must give me leave to judge for myself. In making me the offer, you must have satisfied the delicacy of your feelings with regard to my family. (*Rising.*) This matter may, therefore, be considered as finally settled.

MR. COLLINS. When I do myself the honour of speaking to you next on the subject, I shall hope to receive a more favourable answer than you have now given me.

ELIZABETH. (*Rapidly.*) Really, Mr. Collins, you puzzle me exceedingly. If what I have hitherto said encourages you, I know not how to express my refusal in such a way as may convince you of its being one.

MR. COLLINS. You must give me leave to flatter myself, my dear cousin, that your refusal of my addresses is merely words, of course. My reasons for believing it are chiefly that in spite of your manifold attractions, it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made to you. I shall choose, therefore, to attribute it to your

wish of increasing my love by suspense, according to the usual practice of elegant females.

ELIZABETH. I do assure you, sir, that I have no pretensions whatever to that kind of elegance which consists in tormenting a respectable man. I would rather be paid the compliment of being believed sincere. I thank you again for the honour you have done me, but to accept your proposals is absolutely impossible. My feelings in every respect forbid it. Can I speak plainer?

MR. COLLINS. You are uniformly charming! and I am persuaded that, when sanctioned by the express authority of both your excellent parents, my proposals will not fail of being acceptable. (*Exit Elizabeth.*)

(*Enter Mrs. Bennet in a hurry.*)

MRS. BENNET. Mr. Collins, my dear Mr. Collins, I do congratulate you—and ourselves too, for that matter, on the happy prospect of our being more closely related.

MR. COLLINS. I am delighted that it meets with your approval. At present, I am bound to say that my cousin, to attract me more, has repulsed my advances. I trust I have every reason to be satisfied with the result, however, since the refusal my cousin has given would naturally flow from her bashful modesty.

MRS. BENNET. That is not like Lizzie, Mr. Collins, but depend upon it, she shall be brought to reason. I will speak to her about it directly. She is a very headstrong, foolish girl, and does not know her own interests; but I will make her know it.

MR. COLLINS. Pardon me for interrupting you, madam; but if she is really headstrong and foolish, I know not whether she would altogether be a very desirable wife to a man in my situation, who naturally looks for——

MRS. BENNET. Sir, you quite misunderstand me; Lizzy

is only headstrong in such matters as these ; in everything else she is as good-natured a girl as ever lived. (*Rises.*) I will go directly to Mr. Bennet, and we will very soon settle it with her, I am sure. (*Enter Mr. Bennet.*) Oh, here is Mr. Bennet—Mr. Bennet !

MR. COLLINS. If you will allow me, madam, I will leave you. (*Bows and exit.*)

MRS. BENNET. O Mr. Bennet, you are wanted immediately. You must come and make Lizzie marry Mr. Collins ; for she vows she will not have him, and if you do not make haste he will change his mind, and not have her.

MR. BENNET. I have not the pleasure of understanding you. Of what are you talking ?

MRS. BENNET. Of Mr. Collins and Lizzy ; Lizzy declares she will not have Mr. Collins, and Mr. Collins begins to say that he will not have Lizzy.

MR. BENNET. And what am I to do on the occasion ? It seems a hopeless business.

MRS. BENNET. Speak to Lizzy about it yourself. Tell her you insist upon her marrying him.

MR. BENNET. Let her be called down. She shall hear my opinion. (*Mrs. Bennet rings the bell. Enter servant.*) Send Miss Elizabeth to me. (*Exit servant. Mr. Bennet drums on the table with his fingers. Enter Elizabeth.*)

MR. BENNET. Come here, child. I have sent for you on an affair of importance. I understand that Mr. Collins has made you an offer of marriage. Is it true ?

ELIZABETH. It is, sir.

MR. BENNET. Very well. And this offer of marriage you have refused ?

ELIZABETH. I have, sir.

MR. BENNET. Very well ; we now come to the point. Your mother insists upon your accepting it. Is it not so, Mrs. Bennet ?

MRS. BENNET. Yes, or I will never see her again.

MR. BENNET. An unhappy alternative is before you, Elizabeth. From this day you must be a stranger to one of your parents. Your mother will never see you again if you do not marry Mr. Collins, and I will never see you again if you do! (*Elizabeth laughs, Mrs. Bennet falls into a chair and faints.*)

CURTAIN.

FOREST HOSPITALITY

CHARACTERS

MAID MARIAN	LITTLE JOHN
KNIGHT [<i>KING RICHARD in disguise</i>]	SCARLET
FRIAR TUCK	MONK
ROBIN HOOD	SIR WILLIAM

SCENE

A glade in Sherwood Forest, Nottingham. MAID MARIAN in the dress of a young forester is leaning, Sherwood fashion, against a tree. Enter a KNIGHT on horseback.

MARIAN. In God's name, Sir Knight, you are late to your meals. My master has tarried dinner for thee these three hours.

KNIGHT. I doubt I am not he you wot of. I am nowhere bidden to-day, and I know none in this neighbourhood.

MARIAN. We feared your memory would be treacherous; therefore am I stationed here to refresh it.

KNIGHT. Who is your master and where does he abide?

MARIAN. My master is called Robin Hood, and he abides hard by.

KNIGHT. And what knows he of me?

MARIAN. He knows you, as he knows every wayfaring knight and friar, by instinct.

KNIGHT. Gramercy, then I understand his bidding. But how if I say I will not come ?

MARIAN. I am enjoined to bring you. If persuasion avail not, I must use other argument.

KNIGHT. Say'st thou so ? I doubt if thy stripling rhetoric would convince me.

MARIAN. That we will see.

KNIGHT. We are not equally matched, boy. I should get less honour by thy conquest than grief by thy injury.

MARIAN. Perhaps my strength is more than my seeming, and my cunning more than my strength. Therefore let it please your knighthood to dismount.

KNIGHT. (*Springing from his saddle.*) It shall please my knighthood to chastise thy presumption.

(*They draw and fight for a few minutes, with slight damage to Marian's jerkin and to the Knight's plume.*)

A VOICE (*from the thicket*). Well fought, girl; well fought. Mass, that had nigh been a shrewd hit. Thou owest him for that, lass. Marry, stand by, I'll pay him for thee.

(*Enter a tall Friar, brandishing a huge cudgel.*)

KNIGHT. Who art thou ?

FRIAR. I am the church militant of Sherwood. Why art thou in arms against our lady queen ?

KNIGHT. What meanest thou ?

FRIAR. Truly, this is our liege lady of the forest, against whom I do apprehend thee in act of treason. What sayest thou for thyself ?

KNIGHT. I say that if this be indeed a lady, man never yet held me so long.

FRIAR. Spoken like one who hath done execution. (*Brandishes his cudgel.*) Wilt thou fight ? or wilt thou dine ? or wilt thou fight and dine ? or wilt thou dine and fight ? I am for thee, choose as thou mayest.

KNIGHT. I will dine ; for with lady I never fought before,

and with friar I never fought yet, and with neither will I ever fight knowingly. If this be the queen of the forest, I will not, being in her own dominions, be backward to do her homage. (*Kisses her hand.*)

FRIAR. Gramercy, Sir Knight, I laud thee for thy courtesy, which I deem to be no less than thy valour. Now do thou follow me, while I follow my nose, which scents the pleasant odour of roast from the depth of the forest recesses. I will lead thy horse, and do thou lead my lady. (*Exeunt, the Friar leading and singing.*)

When the wind blows, when the wind blows
From where under buck the dry log glows,
What guide can you follow,
O'er brake and o'er hollow,
So true as a ghostly, ghostly nose ?

The scene changes to the august presence of ROBIN HOOD and his court. Under a high canopy of living boughs, a board is covered with choice food and liquor. A hundred foresters are assembled for dinner. Enter the FRIAR, the KNIGHT, and MAID MARIAN.

ROBIN. Welcome, Sir Knight.

(*The Knight takes his seat between Robin and Marian. Between Little John and Scarlet is seated a Monk, weeping.*)

ROBIN. (*To Monk.*) Why dost thou weep, man ? Thou hast done thine embassy justly, and shalt have thy Lady's grace.

MONK. Alack ! alack ! no embassy had I, as well thou knowest, but to take to my abbey in safety the treasure whereof thou hast despoiled me.

FRIAR TUCK. Propound me his case and I will give him ghostly counsel.

ROBIN. You well remember the sorrowful knight who dined with us here twelve months and a day gone by ?

FRIAR TUCK. Well do I. His lands were in danger with a certain abbot, who would allow no longer day for their redemption. You lent him the four hundred pounds which he needed, and which he was to repay this day.

ROBIN. And here this faithful monk hath brought it me duly, principal and interest to a penny, as Little John can testify, who counted it. To be sure, he denied having it, but that was to prove our faith. We sought and found it.

MONK. I know nothing of your knight, and the money was our own.

(Little John *brings the wailing Monk his horse, and Robin bids him depart. The Knight laughs heartily as the Monk rides off.*)

FRIAR TUCK. They say, Sir Knight, they should laugh who win : but thou laughest who art likely to lose.

KNIGHT. I have won a good dinner, some mirth, and some knowledge : and I cannot lose by paying for them.

ROBIN. Bravely said. Still it becomes thee to pay : for it is not meet that a poor forester should treat a rich knight. How much money hast thou with thee ?

KNIGHT. Troth, I know not. Sometimes much, sometimes little, sometimes none. But search, and what thou findest, keep : and for the sake of thy kind heart and open hand, be it what it may, I shall wish it were more.

ROBIN. Then, since thou sayest so, not a penny will I touch. Many a false churl comes hither, and disburses against his will : and till there is lack of these, I prey not on true men.

KNIGHT. Thou art thyself a true man, right well I judge, Robin, and seemest more like one bred in court than to thy present outlaw life.

FRIAR. Our life is a craft, an art, and a mystery. How much of it, think you, could be learned at court ?

KNIGHT. Indeed, I cannot say ; but I should apprehend very little.

FRIAR. And so should I. Yet we all love and honour King Richard, and here is a deep draught to his health. Our virtues are truly akin to those of Cœur de Lion. Richard is courteous, bountiful, honest, and valiant, and so also is Robin. They are twin spirits and should be friends but that fortune hath differently cast their lot.

MARIAN. And you may add, Friar, that Robin, no less than Richard, is king in his own dominion; and that if his subjects be fewer, yet are they more uniformly loyal.

KNIGHT. I would, fair lady, that thy latter observation were not so true. But I nothing doubt, Robin, that if Richard could hear your friar, and see you and your fair lady as I now do, there is not a man in England whom he would take by the hand more cordially than yourself.

ROBIN. Gramercy, Sir Knight—

LITTLE JOHN. (*Interrupting.*) Hark!

(*A distant trampling of horses heard. A group of horsemen in holiday dresses becomes visible among the trees.*)

ROBIN. God's my life! what means this? To arms, my merry men all.

(*Enter Sir William.*)

SIR WILLIAM. No arms, Robin. Have you forgotten Sir William of the Lee?

ROBIN. No, by my fay, and right welcome again to Sherwood.

SIR WILLIAM. I come late, Robin; but I came by a wrestling, where I found a good yeoman wrongfully beset by a crowd of sturdy varlets, and I stayed to do him right.

ROBIN. I thank thee for that, in God's name, as if thy good service had been to myself.

SIR WILLIAM. And here is thy four hundred pounds; and my men have brought thee a hundred bows and as many well-furnished quivers; which I beseech thee to

receive and to use as a poor token of my grateful kindness to thee : for me and my wife and children didst thou redeem from beggary.

ROBIN. Thy bows and arrows will I joyfully receive : but of thy money, not a penny. It is paid already, as this good knight can testify, who saw the messenger depart but now.

SIR WILLIAM. (*Looking round to the knight and instantly falling on his knees.*) God save King Richard !

ALL. (*in chorus, dropping on their knees together.*) God save King Richard !

KING RICHARD. (*Smiling.*) Rise, rise ; Robin is king here, as his lady hath shown. I have heard much of thee, Robin, both of thy present and of thy former state. And this, thy fair forest-queen, is, if tales say true, the Lady Matilda Fitzwater. (*Marian bows her head in acknowledgement.*) Justice shall be done to thee, Robin, if thou wilt leave thy forest life and resume thy earldom, and be a peer of Cœur de Lion : for braver heart and juster hand I never yet found. (*Robin looks round on his men.*) Your followers shall have free pardon, and such of them as thou wilt part with shall have maintenance from me ; and if ever I confess to priest, it shall be to thy friar.

FRIAR. Gramercy to your majesty.

(*They say farewell to the forest with something of a heavy heart. Exeunt, the friar singing as he turns his back upon its bounds :*

Ye pleasant sights of leaf and flower,
 Ye pleasant sounds of bird and bee,
 Ye sports of deer in sylvan bower,
 Ye feasts beneath the greenwood tree,
 Ye baskings in the vernal sun,
 Ye slumbers in the summer dell,
 Ye trophies that this arm has won—
 And must you hear your friar's farewell ?)

TROUBLED TIMES IN SCOTLAND

CHARACTERS

MR. MORTON, *Laird of Milnwood*
 HARRY MORTON, *his nephew*
 SERGEANT BOTHWELL, *a soldier*
 FOUR TROOPERS (*under Sergeant Bothwell*)
 CUDDIE HEADRIGG
 MRS. WILSON, *Mr. Morton's Housekeeper*
 MAUSE HEADRIGG, *an old Whig, Cuddie's mother*
 GRAHAME OF CLAVERHOUSE, *a Life Guard Officer*
 MAJOR BELLENDEN
 LORD EVANDALE
 LADY MARGARET BELLENDEN
 EDITH BELLENDEN
 JENNY, *Edith's Attendant*
 Attendants and Servants

SCENE I

The dining-hall at Milnwood. The Laird and his nephew seated with the housekeeper 'above the salt'. 'Below the salt', CUDDIE and his mother, OLD ROBIN, a housemaid, and two labourers. All engaged with their dinners, CUDDIE eating voraciously.

MILNWOOD. (*To himself as he looks at Cuddie.*) Pay thee wages, quotha? Thou wilt eat in a week the value of mair than thou canst work for in a month.

(*Loud knocking 'off'. The company looks in alarm at the door—the housekeeper runs to look through a spy-hole.*)

MRS. WILSON. (*Returning, wringing her hands.*) The red-coats! the red-coats!

MILNWOOD. Robin—Ploughman, what ca' they ye?—Barnsman—Nevoy Harry—open the door, open the door! (*He slips all the silver spoons into his pocket.*) Speak them fair, sirs—they winna bide thraving—we're a' harried!

(All the servants start up, one opens the door and admits Sergeant Bothwell and four troopers.)

CUDDIE. *(To Mause.)* Now, ye daft auld carline, mak yoursell deaf—and let me speak for ye. I wad like ill to get my neck raxed for an auld wife's clashes, though ye be our mither.

MAUSE. Oh, hinny, ay; I'se be silent. But bethink ye, my dear, them that deny the Word——

MILNWOOD. What is your pleasure here, gentlemen?

BOTHWELL. We come in behalf of the king. Why did you keep us so long standing at the door?

MILNWOOD. We were at dinner, and the door was locked as is usual in this country. I am sure, gentlemen, if I had ken'd ony servants of our gude king had stood at the door—But wad ye please to drink some ale—or some brandy—or a cup of claret wine? *(He pauses between each item.)*

1ST TROOPER. Claret for me.

2ND TROOPER. I like ale better, provided it is right juice of John Barleycorn.

MILNWOOD. Better never was malted. I can hardly say sae muckle for the claret. It's thin and cauld, gentlemen.

BOTHWELL. Brandy, ale, claret? We'll try them all, and stick to that which is best. There's sense in that, if the worst Whig in Scotland had said it. *(Milnwood pulls out two great keys, which he gives to Mrs. Wilson. Exit Mrs. Wilson.)*

BOTHWELL. *(Seating himself, and fishing in the broth with a fork, upon which he secures a small mutton cutlet.)* What's this? Meat? I think I could eat a bit. *(He tries.)* Why, it's as tough as if——

MILNWOOD. *(In haste.)* If there is anything better in the house, sir——

BOTHWELL. No, no, it's not worth while; I must proceed to business. You attend Poundtext, the presbyterian parson, I understand, Mr. Morton?

MILNWOOD. By the indulgence of his gracious majesty and the government, for I wad do nothing out of law. The ministers are a hamelier kind of folk, and I can follow their doctrine better.

BOTHWELL. Well, I care nothing about that ; they are indulged, and there's an end of it ; but, for my part, if I were to give the law, never a crop-ear'd cur of the whole pack should bark in a Scotch pulpit. (*Enter Mrs. Wilson with wine.*) There comes the liquor ; put it down, my good lady. (*He empties claret into a beaker and drinks it.*) You did your wine injustice, my friend. Will you pledge me to the king's health ?

MILNWOOD. With pleasure, in ale ; but I never drink claret, and keep only a very little for some honoured friends.

BOTHWELL. Like me, I suppose. (*He pushes the bottle over to Henry Morton.*) Here, young man, pledge you the king's health. (*Henry fills a small glass, in spite of nudges and signs from his uncle.*)

BOTHWELL. Well, have ye all drunk the toast ? (*He looks at Mause.*) What is that old wife about ? She shall drink the king's health.

CUDDIE. If your honour pleases, this is my mither, sir, and she's deaf as Corra-linn ; but if your honour pleases, I am ready to drink the king's health for her.

BOTHWELL. I dare swear you are—help yourself man ; all's free where'er I come—Tom, help the maid to a comfortable cup. Fill round once more. Here's to our noble commander, Colonel Grahame of Claverhouse ! What is the old woman groaning for ? She looks as very a Whig as ever sate on a hill-side. Do you renounce the Covenant, good woman ?

CUDDIE. Whilk covenant is your honour meaning ? Is it the Covenant of Works, or the Covenant of Grace ?

BOTHWELL. Any covenant : all covenants that were ever hatched.

CUDDIE. (*Shouting into Mause's ear.*) Mither, the gentleman wants to ken if ye will renunce the Covenant of Works.

MAUSE. With all my heart, Cuddie, and pray that my feet may be delivered from the snare thereof.

BOTHWELL. Come, the old dame has come off more frankly than I expected. You have all heard, I suppose, of the horrid and barbarous murder of the Archbishop of St. Andrews? (*All stare and look at each other.*)

MILNWOOD. We have heard of some such misfortune, but were in hopes it had not been true.

BOTHWELL. (*Producing a paper.*) There is the relation published by the Government, old gentleman; what do you think of it?

MILNWOOD. (*Stammering.*) Think sir? Wh—wh—whatever the council please to think of it.

BOTHWELL. (*With authority.*) I desire to have your opinion more explicitly, my friend.

MILNWOOD. (*Looking at the paper.*) I think it an execrable—murder and parricide—devised by implacable cruelty—utterly abominable, and a scandal to the land.

BOTHWELL. Well said, old gentleman. I wish you joy of your good principles. Now comes your turn. (*To Harry Morton.*) What think you of the matter in hand?

HARRY. I should have little objection to answer you, if I knew what right you had to put the question.

MRS. WILSON. Lord preserve us! to ask the like o' that at a trooper, when a' the folk ken they do whatever they like through the hail country wi' man and woman, body and beast.

MILNWOOD. Hold your peace, sir, or answer the gentleman discreetly. Do you mean to affront the king's authority in the person of a sergeant of the Life Guards?

BOTHWELL. Silence, all of you! You ask me for my right to examine you, sir; my cockade and my broadsword are my commission; if you want to know more about it,

you may look at the act of council empowering his majesty's officers and soldiers to search for, examine, and apprehend suspicious persons ; and therefore, once more, I ask you your opinion of the death of Archbishop Sharpe—it's a new touch-stone we have got for trying people's metal.

HARRY. I have no hesitation to say that the perpetrators have committed, in my opinion, a rash and wicked action, which I regret the more, as I foresee it will be made the cause of proceedings against many who are both innocent of the deed, and as far from approving it as myself.

BOTHWELL. Aha ! my friend, I think I have seen you before, and in very suspicious company.

HARRY. I saw you once, in the public-house of the town of—

BOTHWELL. And with whom did you leave that public-house, youngster ? Was it not with John Balfour of Burley, one of the murderers of the Archbishop ?

HARRY. I did leave the house with the person you have named : I scorn to deny it ; but so far from knowing him to be a murderer of the primate, I did not even know at the time that such a crime had been committed.

MILNWOOD. Lord have mercy on me, I am ruined ! utterly ruined and undone ! That callant's tongue will rin the head aff his ain shoulders, and waste my gudes to the very grey cloak on my back.

BOTHWELL. But you knew Burley to be a rebel and traitor, and you knew the prohibition to deal with such persons. You knew that, as a loyal subject, you were prohibited to correspond with him, or to supply him with meat, drink, house, or victual under the highest pains—you knew all this, and yet you broke the law. Where did you part from him ? Did you give him harbourage in this very house ?

MILNWOOD. In this house ! he dared not for his neck bring ony traitor into a house o' mine.

BOTHWELL. Dare he deny that he did so ?

HARRY. As you charge it to me as a crime, you will excuse my saying anything that would criminate myself.

MILNWOOD. O, the lands of Milnwood ! the bonny lands of Milnwood ! They are barking and fleeing, outfield and infield.

HARRY. No, sir, you shall not suffer on my account—I own (*turning to Bothwell*) I did give this man a night's lodging, as to an old military comrade of my father. But it was not only without my uncle's knowledge, but contrary to his express general orders. I trust, if my evidence is considered as good against myself, it will have some weight in proving my uncle's innocence.

BOTHWELL. Come, young man, you're a smart spark enough ; tell me all you know about this Burley, where he went, and where he is likely now to be found, and I'll wink as hard on your share of the business as my duty will permit.

HARRY. You will excuse my answering that question, sir. The same reasons which induced me to afford him hospitality would command me to respect his secret, if, indeed, he had trusted me with any.

BOTHWELL. So you refuse to give me an answer ?

HARRY. I have none to give.

BOTHWELL. Perhaps I could teach you to find one, by tying a piece of lighted match between your fingers.

MRS. WILSON. (*Aside to Milnwood.*) O, for pity's sake, sir, gie them siller—it's siller they're seeking—they'll murder Mr. Henry, and yourself next.

MILNWOOD. (*Groaning.*) If twenty p—p—punds would make up this unhappy matter——

MRS. WILSON. My master would gie twenty pund sterling——

MILNWOOD. (*Interrupting.*) Punds Scotch !

MRS. WILSON. —— pund sterling, if ye wad hae the

goodness to look over the lad's misconduct. It wad do ye little gude, I'm sure, to burn his bonny finger-ends.

BOTHWELL. Why, I don't know—most of my cloth would have the money and the prisoner too ; but I bear a conscience, and if your master will stand to your offer, and if all in the house will take the test-oath, I do not know but——

MRS. WILSON. O ay, ay, sir, ony test, ony oaths ye please ! (*Aside to Milnwood.*) Haste ye away, sir, and get the siller, or they will burn the house about our lugs. (*Exit Milnwood slowly.*)

BOTHWELL. (*To Mrs. Wilson.*) You, what 's your name, woman ?

MRS. WILSON. Alison Wilson, sir !

BOTHWELL. You, Alison Wilson, solemnly swear, certify, and declare——

CUDDIE. (*To Mause.*) Oh ! whist, mither, whist ! they're upon a communing—oh ! whist, and they'll agree weel eneuch e'enow.

MAUSE. I will not whist, Cuddie, I will uplift my voice and spare not. I will confound the man of sin, even the scarlet man, and through my voice shall Mr. Henry be freed from the net of the fowler.

CUDDIE. She has her leg ower the harrows now, stop her wha can—I see her cocked up behint a dragoon on her way to the Tolbooth.

MAUSE. (*To Bothwell.*) And do ye think to come here, wi' your soul-killing, saint-seducing oaths, and tests, your snares, and your traps ? Surely it is in vain that a net is spread in the sight of any bird.

BOTHWELL. Eh, what, good dame ? Here 's a Whig miracle ! The old wife has got both her ears and tongue. Go to, hold your peace, and remember whom you talk to, you old idiot.

MAUSE. Whae do I falk to ! Eh, sirs, ower weel may the

sorrowing land ken what ye are. Malignant adherents ye are to the prelates, foul props to a feeble cause, beasts of prey.

BOTHWELL. (*In astonishment.*) Upon my soul, this is the finest language I ever heard.

3RD TROOPER. Curse the old hag ! gag her, and take her to head-quarters.

BOTHWELL. For shame, Andrews ; remember the good lady belongs to the fair sex. Meantime I must necessarily carry off this young man to head-quarters. I cannot answer to my commanding officer to leave him in a house where I have heard so much treason and fanaticism. (*Harry is bound.*)

CUDDIE. See now, mither, what ye hae dune ; there 's the Philistines are gaun to whirry away Mr. Henry. (*Re-enter Milnwood.*)

MAUSE. Haud yer tongue, ye cowardly loon. If you and thae thowless gluttons wad testify wi' your hands as I have testified wi' my tongue, they should never harle the precious young lad awa' to captivity.

(*Milnwood meanwhile hands a purse to Bothwell, who weighs it in his hands, and shakes his head.*)

BOTHWELL. I daren't venture it for them : that old woman has spoken too loud, and before all the men, too. Hark ye, old gentleman, I must take your nephew to head-quarters, so I cannot, in conscience, keep more than is my due in civility money. (*He gives each soldier a guinea, retains three himself, and holds out the purse.*) Now you have the comfort to know that your kinsman will be civilly used. Only you know that these fellows of mine are not obliged to be silent on the subject of the fine sermon we have had from that old puritan. And I presume you are aware that the consequences of delation will be a heavy fine before the council.

MILNWOOD. Good sergeant—worthy captain ! I am

sure there is no person in my house, to my knowledge, would give cause of offence.

BOTHWELL. Nay, you shall hear her give her testimony, as she calls it, herself.

CUDDIE. Lord ! noble sir, an auld wife's tongue 's but a feckless matter to mak sic a fash about.

BOTHWELL. Hold your peace, my lad, while you are well. Come, good dame, you see your master will not believe that you can give us so bright a testimony.

MAUSE. Woe to the carnal self-seekers, giving mammon of unrighteousness to the sons of Belial, that it may make their peace with them !

BOTHWELL. There 's a fine sound doctrine for you, Mr. Morton ! How like you that ? I think we can carry the greatest part of it in our heads. But it is your own affair. (*Milnwood goes to take the purse, which is held out again.*)

MRS. WILSON. (*In a whisper.*) Are ye mad ? Tell them to keep it ; it 's our only chance to make them quiet.

MILNWOOD. I canna do it, Ailie, I canna do it. I canna part wi' the siller I hae counted sae often ower, to thae blackguards.

MRS. WILSON. Then I maun do it mysell, or see a' gang wrang thegither. (*To Bothwell.*) My master, sir, canna think o' taking back ony thing at the hand of an honourable gentleman like you ; he implores ye to pit up the siller and let us tak nae wrang for the daft speeches of an auld jaud (*turning to Mause*), a daft auld Whig randy that ne'er was in the house till yesterday afternoon, and that sall ne'er cross the door-stane again an anes I had her out o't.

CUDDIE. (*In a whisper, to Mause.*) Ay, ay, e'en sae. I was sure that wad be the upshot o't, mither.

MAUSE. Whist my bairn, and dinna murmur—cross their door-stane ! weel I wot I'll ne'er cross their door-stane.

BOTHWELL. To horse, men! (*Exeunt soldiers with Henry.*)

MILNWOOD. (*Sinking into a chair.*) Ruined on a' sides, harried and undone—harried and undone.

MRS. WILSON. (*To Mause.*) Ill luck be in the graning corse o' thee! The prettiest lad in Clydesdale this day maun be a sufferer, and a' for you and your daft whiggery.

MAUSE. Gae wa'; I trow ye are yet in the bonds of sin, and in the gall of iniquity, to grudge your bonniest and best—

CUDDIE. (*Dragging her off.*) Hout, tout, mither, dinna deave the gentlewoman wi' your testimony! ye hae preached enough for sax days.

MAUSE. (*Going.*) Testimony . . . Covenant . . . malignants . . . indulgence. (*These are the only words heard, but she is muttering all the time. Exeunt Cuddie and Mause.*)

MRS. WILSON. Ill-far'd, crazy, crack-brained gowk, that she is! to set up to be sae muckle better than ither folk, the auld besom, and to bring sae muckle distress on a douce quiet family! If it hadna been that I am mair than half a gentlewoman by my station, I wad hae tried my ten nails in the wizen'd hide o' her.

CURTAIN.

SCENE II

The stone hall in Tillietudlem Tower. A table in the centre.

MORTON *discovered.* *To him enter SERGEANT BOTHWELL, followed by two dragoons, one carrying handcuffs.*

BOTHWELL. You must come before him, young man, but first we must put you in trim.

MORTON. In trim! What do you mean?

BOTHWELL. Why, we must put on these rough bracelets. I durst not—nay, I durst do anything—but I would not for three hours' plunder of a stormed town bring a Whig

before my colonel without his being ironed. Come, come, young man, don't look sulky about it.

(He advances to iron Morton; the latter picks up an oaken-seat and threatens him.)

MORTON. I'll dash out the brains of the first who approaches.

BOTHWELL. I could manage you in a moment, my youngster, but I had rather you would strike sail quietly. You had better be prudent, and don't spoil your own sport. They say here in the castle that Lady Margaret's niece is immediately to marry Lord Evandale. I saw them close together in the passage yonder, and I heard her ask him to intercede for your pardon. But what's the matter with you? You are as pale as a sheet.

MORTON. Miss Bellenden ask my life of Lord Evandale?

BOTHWELL. Ay, ay; there's no friend like a woman; their interest carries all in court and camp. Come, you are reasonable now. Ay, I thought you would come round.

(Morton allows himself to be handcuffed.)

MORTON. *(To himself.)* My life begged of him, and by her! ay, ay, put on the irons—my limbs shall not refuse to bear what has entered into my very soul. My life begged by Edith, and begged of Evandale!

BOTHWELL. Ay, and he has power to grant it, too. He can do more with the colonel than any man in the regiment.

(Enter Lady Margaret, Major Bellenden, Colonel Claverhouse, Edith Bellenden, Lord Evandale, and attendants. Claverhouse seats himself at the table. The others group themselves in the rear. Morton glances at Edith, then walks to the table.)

MORTON. By what right is it, sir, that these soldiers have dragged me from my family, and put fetters on the limbs of a free man?

CLAVERHOUSE. By my commands ; and I now lay my commands on you to be silent and hear my questions.

MORTON. I will not ; I will know whether I am in lawful custody, and before a civil magistrate, ere the charter of my country shall be forfeited in my person.

CLAVERHOUSE. A pretty springald this, upon my honour !

BELLENDEN. Are you mad ? For God's sake, Henry Morton, remember you are speaking to one of his majesty's officers high in the service.

MORTON. It is for that very reason, sir, that I desire to know what right he has to detain me without a legal warrant. Were he a civil officer of the law I should know my duty was submission.

CLAVERHOUSE. (*To Bellenden.*) Your friend, here, is one of those scrupulous gentlemen, who, like the madman in the play, will not tie his cravat without the warrant of Mr. Justice Overdo ; but I will let him see, before we part, that my shoulder-knot is as legal a badge of authority as the mace of the Justiciary. So, waiving this discussion, you will be pleased, young man, to tell me directly when you saw Balfour of Burley.

MORTON. As I know no right you have to ask such a question, I decline replying to it.

CLAVERHOUSE. You confessed to my sergeant that you saw and entertained him, knowing him to be an inter-communed traitor ; why are you not so frank with me ?

MORTON. Because I presume you are, from education, taught to understand the rights upon which you seem disposed to trample ; and I am willing you should be aware there are yet Scotsmen who can assert the liberties of Scotland.

CLAVERHOUSE. And these supposed rights you would vindicate with your sword, I presume ?

MORTON. Were I armed as you are, and we were alone upon a hill-side, you should not ask me that question twice.

CLAVERHOUSE. (*Coldly.*) It is quite enough; your language corresponds with all I have heard of you—but you are the son of a soldier, though a rebellious one, and you shall not die the death of a dog; I will save you that indignity.

MORTON. Die in what manner I may, I will die like the son of a brave man; and the ignominy you mention shall remain with those who shed innocent blood.

CLAVERHOUSE. Make your peace, then, with Heaven in five minutes' space. (*To the Sergeant.*) Bothwell, lead him down to the court-yard and draw up your party.

LADY MARGARET. (*Interposing.*) Oh, Colonel Grahame, spare his young blood! Leave him to the law—do not repay my hospitality by shedding men's blood on the threshold of my doors!

BELLENDEN. Colonel Grahame, you must answer this violence. Don't think, though I am old and feckless, that my friend's son shall be murdered before my eyes with impunity. I can find friends that shall make you answer it.

CLAVERHOUSE. (*Unmoved.*) Be satisfied, Major Bellenden, I *will* answer it; and you, madam, might spare me the pain of resisting this passionate intercession for a traitor, when you consider the noble blood your own house has lost by such as he.

LADY MARGARET. Colonel Grahame, I leave vengeance to God, who calls it His own. The shedding of this young man's blood will not call back the lives that were dear to me; and how can it comfort me to think that there has maybe been another widowed mother made childless, like myself, by a deed done at my very door-stane.

CLAVERHOUSE. This is stark madness. I must do my duty to Church and State. Here are a thousand villains hard by in open rebellion, and you ask me to pardon a young fanatic who is enough of himself to set a whole kingdom in a blaze! It cannot be. Remove him, Bothwell.

(Edith springs to her feet, but falls fainting into her maid Jenny's arms.)

JENNY. Help! Help, for God's sake! my young lady is dying.

EVANDALE. (*Stepping forward.*) Colonel Grahame, before proceeding in this matter, will you speak a word with me in private?

(Claverhouse and Evandale converse apart.)

EVANDALE. I think I need not remind you, Colonel, that when our family interest was of service to you last year in that affair in the privy-council, you considered yourself as laid under some obligation to us.

CLAVERHOUSE. Certainly, my dear Evandale; I am not a man who forgets such debts; you will delight me by showing how I can evince my gratitude.

EVANDALE. I will hold the debt cancelled, if you will spare this young man's life.

CLAVERHOUSE. (*In surprise.*) Evandale, you are mad, absolutely mad; what interest can you have in this son of an old roundhead? His father was positively the most dangerous man in all Scotland; his son seems his very model. Were he a country booby, do you think I would have refused such a trifle as his life to Lady Margaret? This is a lad of fire, zeal, and education. I mention this, not as refusing your request—if you still ask his life he shall have it.

EVANDALE. Keep him close prisoner, but do not be surprised if I persist in requesting you will not put him to death. I have most urgent reasons for what I ask.

CLAVERHOUSE. Be it so then—but, young man, should you wish in your future life to rise to eminence in the service of your king, let it be your first task to subject to the public interest, private affections and feelings. (*They return to the table, Claverhouse gazes intently at Morton, and whispers to Evandale.*) You see him? He is tottering

on the verge between time and eternity ; yet his is the only check unblenched, the only eye that is calm. If that man should ever come to head an army of rebels, you will have much to answer for, on account of this morning's work. (*To Morton.*) Young man, your life is for the present safe. Remove him, Bothwell, and let him be brought along with the other prisoners.

MORTON. If my life be granted at Lord Evandale's request——

CLAVERHOUSE. Take the prisoner away, Bothwell ; I have time neither to make nor to hear fine speeches.

BOTHWELL. (*Aside to Morton, as he leads him away.*) Have you three more lives in your pocket, that you can afford to let your tongue run away with you at this rate ? (*Exeunt Bothwell and Morton.*)

A FAITHFUL JESTER

CHARACTERS

WAMBA, *Jester of Cedric the Saxon*

CEDRIC, *A Saxon franklin*

ATHELSTANE, *A Saxon of royal descent*

SCENE

A cell in Front-de-Bœuf's Castle, whercin are two prisoners, CEDRIC THE SAXON and ATHELSTANE. Enter WAMBA, arrayed in the cowl and frock of a hermit, with his knotted cord twisted about his middle.

WAMBA. (*In muffled tones.*) *Pax vobiscum.* The blessing of St. Dunstan and all the other saints whatsoever be upon ye and about ye.

CEDRIC. Enter freely. With what intent art thou come hither ?

WAMBA. To bid you prepare yourselves for death.

CEDRIC. (*Starting*). It is impossible! Fearless and wicked as these Normans are, they dare not attempt such open and gratuitous cruelty!

WAMBA. Alas! to restrain them by their sense of humanity is the same as to stop a runaway horse with a bridle of silk thread. Bethink thee, therefore, noble Cedric, and you also, gallant Athelstane, what crimes you have committed in the flesh; for this very day will ye be called to answer at a higher tribunal.

CEDRIC. Hearest thou this, Athelstane? We must rouse up our hearts to this last action, since better it is we should die like men than live like slaves.

ATHELSTANE. I am ready to stand the worst of their malice, and shall walk to my death with as much composure as ever I did to my dinner.

CEDRIC. Let us then unto our holy gear, father.

WAMBA. (*In his natural tone.*) Wait yet a moment, good uncle. Better look long before you leap in the dark.

CEDRIC. By my faith, I should know that voice!

WAMBA. (*Throwing back his cowl.*) It is that of your trusty slave and jester. Had you taken a fool's advice formerly, you would not have been here at all. Take a fool's advice now, and you will not be here long.

CEDRIC. How mean'st thou, knave?

WAMBA. Even thus. Take thou this frock and cord, which are all the orders I ever had, and march quietly out of the castle, leaving me your cloak and girdle to take the long leap in thy stead.

CEDRIC. (*In utter astonishment.*) Leave thee in my stead! Why, they would hang thee, my poor knave.

WAMBA. E'en let them do as they are permitted. I trust—no disparagement to your birth—that the son of Witless may hang in a chain with as much gravity as the chain hung upon his ancestor, the alderman.

CEDRIC. Well, Wamba, for one thing will I grant thy

request. And that is, if thou wilt make the exchange of garments with Lord Athelstane instead of me.

WAMBA. No, by St. Dunstan ; there were little reason in that. Good right there is that the son of Witless should suffer to save the son of Hereward ; but little wisdom there were in his dying for the benefit of one whose fathers were strangers to his.

CEDRIC. Villain ! the fathers of Athelstane were monarchs of England !

WAMBA. They might be whosoever they pleased ; but my neck stands too straight upon my shoulders to have it twisted for their sake. Wherefore, good my master, either take my proffer yourself or suffer me to leave this dungeon as free as I entered.

CEDRIC. Let the old tree wither, so the stately hope of the forest be preserved. Save the noble Athelstane, my trusty Wamba ! It is the duty of each who has Saxon blood in his veins. Thou and I will abide together the utmost rage of our injurious oppressors, while he, free and safe, shall arouse the awakened spirits of our countrymen to avenge us.

ATHELSTANE. (*Grasping Cedric's hand.*) Not so, not so. I would rather remain in this hall a week without food save the prisoner's stinted loaf, or drink save the prisoner's measure of water, than embrace the opportunity to escape which the slave's untaught kindness has purveyed for his master.

WAMBA. You are called wise men, sirs, and I a crazed fool. But, uncle Cedric and cousin Athelstane, the fool shall decide this controversy for ye, and save ye the trouble of straining courtesies any farther. I am like John-a-Duck's mare, that will let no man mount her but John-a-Duck. I came to save my master, and if he will not consent, I can but go away home again. Kind service cannot be chucked from hand to hand like a shuttlecock. I'll hang for no man but my own born master.

ATHELSTANE. Go, then, noble Cedric. Neglect not this opportunity. Your presence without may encourage friends to our rescue. Your remaining here would ruin us all.

CEDRIC. (*To Wamba*). And is there any prospect of rescue from without ?

WAMBA. Prospect, indeed ! Let me tell you, when you fill my cloak, you are wrapped in a general's cassock. Five hundred men are there without, and I was this morning one of their chief leaders. My fool's cap was a casque and my bauble a truncheon. Well, we shall see what good they will make by exchanging a fool for a wise man. Truly, I fear they will lose in valour what they may gain in discretion. And so, farewell, master ; let my cockscomb hang in your hall of Rotherwood, in memory that I flung away my life for my master like a faithful—fool.

(*They exchange clothes.*)

CEDRIC. (*With tears in his eyes.*) Thy memory shall be preserved, while fidelity and affection have honour upon earth ! But that I trust I shall find the means of saving thee, Athelstane, and thee also, my poor Wamba, thou shouldst not overbear me in this matter. (*A sudden doubt strikes him.*) I know no language but my own, and a few words of their mincing Norman. How shall I bear myself like a reverend brother ?

WAMBA. The spell lies in two words. *Pax vobiscum* will answer all queries. If you go or come, eat or drink, bless or ban, *Pax vobiscum* carries you through it all. It is as useful to a friar as a broomstick to a witch, or a wand to a conjurer. Speak it but thus, in a deep grave tone—*Pax vobiscum*—it is irresistible. Watch and ward, knight and squire, foot and horse, it acts as a charm upon them all. I think, if they bring me out to be hanged to-morrow, as is much to be doubted they may, I will try its weight upon the finisher of the sentence.

CEDRIC. If such prove the case, my religious orders are

soon taken—*Pax vobiscum*. I trust I shall remember the password. Noble Athelstane, farewell ; and farewell, my poor boy, whose heart might make amends for a weaker head. I will save you, or return and die with you. The royal blood of our Saxon kings shall not be spilt while mine beats in my veins ; nor shall one hair fall from the head of the kind knave who risked himself for his master, if Cedric's peril can prevent it. Farewell.

ATHELSTANE. Farewell, noble Cedric. Remember, it is the true part of a friar to accept refreshment, if you are offered any.

WAMBA. Farewell, uncle ; and remember *Pax vobiscum*.
(*Exit Cedric.*)

AN EASTERN SCENE

CHARACTERS

KING RICHARD I	CHAMBERLAIN
BERENGARIA, <i>Queen</i>	EXECUTIONER
EDITH PLANTAGENET, <i>Richard's</i> <i>sister</i>	MONK
	EL HAKIM, <i>a Saracen Physician</i>

SCENE

The right half of the stage represents King Richard's pavilion, with the KING lying on a couch ; an executioner stands before him, resting his arm on a sword four and a half feet in length. The left half represents an outer tent. Enter into the outer tent QUEEN BERENGARIA, the LADY EDITH, and attendants. They are silently denied access to the KING by the chamberlains on watch.

QUEEN. (*To Edith.*) You see : I knew it—the King will not receive us.

KING. (*To Executioner, within.*) Go, speed thine office quickly, sirrah, for in that consists thy mercy. Ten bezants

if thou deal'st on him at one blow. And hark thee, villain, observe if his cheek loses colour or his eye falters—mark me the smallest twitch of the features or wink of the eyelid. I love to know how brave souls meet death.

EDITH. (*To Queen, without.*) If your Grace make not your own way, I make it for you; or if not for your Majesty, for myself, at least. (*To Chamberlain.*) The Queen demands to see King Richard—the wife to speak with her husband.

CHAMBERLAIN. Noble lady, it grieves me to gainsay you, but His Majesty is busied on matters of life and death.

EDITH. And we seek also to speak with him on matters of life and death. (*To Queen.*) I will make entrance for your Grace.

CHAMBERLAIN. I dare not gainsay Her Majesty's pleasure.

(*Enter to King's pavilion Queen, Lady Edith, and Ladies. Richard turns his back to them. Berengaria kneels before him and possesses herself of his right arm.*)

RICHARD. (*With head averted.*) What needs this, Berengaria?

QUEEN. (*Muttering.*) Send away that man—his look kills me!

RICHARD. (*To Executioner.*) Begone, sirrah! what wait'st thou for? Art thou fit to look on these ladies?

EXECUTIONER. Your Highness's pleasure touching the head.

RICHARD. Out with thee, dog! A Christian burial. (*Exit Executioner.*)

(*Turning slowly and half reluctantly.*) And now, foolish wench, what wishest thou? What seeks the lady of my heart in her knight's pavilion at this early and unwonted hour?

QUEEN. Pardon, my most gracious liege, pardon!

KING. Pardon! for what?

QUEEN. First, for entering your royal presence too boldly and unadvisedly——

KING. *Thou* too boldly! The sun might as well ask pardon because his rays entered the windows of some wretch's dungeon. But I was busied with work unfit for thee to witness, my gentle one, and I was unwilling, besides, that thou shouldst risk thy precious health where sickness has been so lately rife.

QUEEN. But thou art now well?

KING. Well enough to break a lance on the bold crest of that champion who shall refuse to acknowledge thee the fairest dame in Christendom.

QUEEN. Thou wilt not then refuse me one boon—only one—only a poor life?

KING. (*Frowning.*) Ha! proceed.

QUEEN. (*Murmuring.*) This unhappy Scottish knight——

KING. (*Sternly.*) Speak not of him, madam; he dies—his doom is fixed.

QUEEN. Nay, my royal liege and love, 'tis but a silken banner neglected—Berengaria will give thee another embroidered with her own hand, and rich as ever dallied with the wind. Every pearl I have shall go to bedeck it, and with every pearl I will drop a tear of thankfulness to my generous knight.

KING. (*Interrupting angrily.*) Thou know'st not what thou say'st. Pearls! Can all the pearls of the East atone for a speck upon England's honour—all the tears that ever woman's eye wept wash away a stain on Richard's fame? Go to, madam, know your place, and your time, and your sphere. At present we have duties in which you cannot be our partner.

QUEEN. (*Whispering to Edith.*) Thou hear'st, Edith. We shall but incense him.

EDITH. Be it so. (*Stepping forward.*) My lord, I, your

poor kinswoman, crave you for justice rather than mercy. To the cry of justice the ears of a monarch should be open at every time, place, and circumstance.

KING. Ha! our cousin Edith? She speaks ever king-like, and king-like will I answer her, so she brings no request unworthy herself or me.

EDITH. My lord, this good knight whose blood you are about to spill hath done, in his time, service to Christendom. He hath fallen from his duty through a snare set for him in mere folly. A message sent to him in the name of one who—why should I not speak it?—it was in my own—induced him for an instant to leave his post.

KING. (*Biting his lips.*) You saw him, then, cousin?

EDITH. I did, my liege. It is no time to explain wherefore. I am here neither to exculpate myself nor to blame others.

KING. And where did you do him such a grace?

EDITH. In the tent of her Majesty the Queen.

KING. Of our royal consort! Now by Heaven, by St. George of England, and every other saint that treads its crystal floor, this is too audacious! That you should have admitted him to an audience by night, in the very tent of our royal consort, and dare to offer this as an excuse for his disobedience and desertion! By my father's soul, Edith, thou shalt rue this thy life long in a monastery!

EDITH. My liege, your greatness licenses tyranny. I have already said I am not here to excuse myself or to inculcate others. I ask you but to extend to one, whose fault was committed under strong temptation, that mercy which even you yourself, Lord King, must one day supplicate at a higher tribunal.

KING. (*Bitterly.*) Can this be Edith Plantagenet?

QUEEN. (*Whispers to Edith.*) Oh, peace, peace, for pity's sake. You do but offend him more!

EDITH. I care not. The spotless virgin fears not the

raging lion. Let him work his will on this worthy knight. Edith, for whom he dies, will know how to weep his memory.

(Enter, hurriedly, a Carmelite monk, his head and person muffled in the long mantle and hood of his Order. He flings himself at Richard's feet and conjures him to stay the execution.)

KING. Now, by both sword and sceptre, the world is leagued to drive me mad ! Fools, women, and monks cross me at every step. How comes he to live still ?

MONK. My gracious liege, I entreated the Lord of Gilsland to stay the execution until I had thrown myself at your royal——

KING. And he was wilful enough to grant thy request ? But it is of a piece with his wonted obstinacy. And what is it thou hast to say ? Speak, in the fiend's name !

MONK. My lord, I swear to thee by my holy Order that this youth hath, under the seal of confession, divulged to me a secret which, if I might confide it to thee, would utterly turn thee from thy bloody purpose in regard to him.

KING. Good father, that I reverence the Church, let the arms which I now wear for her sake bear witness. Give me to know this secret, and I will do what shall seem fitting in the matter.

MONK. My lord, for twenty years have I done penance in the caverns of Engaddi for a great crime. Think you I would betray the secrets of the confessional ? It is abhorrent to my very soul.

KING. So thou art that hermit of whom men speak so much ? And thou art he, too, as I bethink me, to whom the Christian princes sent this very criminal to open a communication with the Soldan, even while I lay on my sick-bed ? Your envoy shall die, the rather and the sooner that thou dost entreat for him.

MONK. *(With great emotion.)* Now God be gracious to

thee, Lord King ! Thou art setting that mischief on foot which thou wilt hereafter wish thou hadst stopped, though it had cost thee a limb. Rash, blinded man, forbear !

KING. (*Stamping with rage.*) Away ! away ! The sun has risen on the dishonour of England, and it is not yet avenged. Ladies and priest, withdraw, if ye would not hear orders which would displease you ; for, by St. George, I swear——

(*Enter El Hakim, the physician.*)

EL HAKIM. Swear NOT !

KING. Ha ! my learned Hakim, come, I hope, to tax our generosity.

EL HAKIM. I come to request instant speech with you——instant—and touching matters of deep interest.

KING. Retire, Berengaria, and, Edith, do you retire also. Nay ; renew not your importunities. This I give to them, that the execution shall not be till high noon. Go and be pacified. Dearest Berengaria, begone. Edith, go if you are wise. (*Exeunt Ladies, in hasty confusion.*)

HERMIT. (*Also retiring.*) King Richard, I do not yet shake the dust from my feet and depart from thy encampment. The sword falls not, but hangs by a hair. Haughty monarch, we shall meet again.

KING. Be it so, haughty priest, prouder in thy goat-skins than princes in purple and fine linen. (*Exit Hermit.*) Now to the matter. In what can I pleasure you, my learned physician ?

EL HAKIM. (*Bowing to the ground.*) Great King, let thy servant speak one word and yet live. I would remind thee that thou owest a life——

KING. And I warrant me thou wouldst have another——in requital, ha ?

EL HAKIM. Such is my humble prayer——even the life of this good knight who is doomed to die.

KING. (*Speaking to himself as he faces his tent.*) I knew what he desired as soon as ever he entered the pavilion. Wife, kinswoman, hermit, Hakim, each appears in the lists as soon as the other is defeated. Ha ! ha ! ha !

EL HAKIM. (*With some contempt.*) A doom of death should not issue from laughing lips. Let thy servant hope that thou hast granted him this man's life.

KING. Take the freedom of a thousand captives instead, and I will give the warrant immediately. This man's life can avail thee nothing, and it is forfeited.

EL HAKIM. All our lives are forfeited. But the great Creditor is merciful.

KING. Thou canst show me no special interest thou hast to become intercessor betwixt me and him.

EL HAKIM. Many a man's life depends upon thy granting this boon.

KING. Explain thy words.

EL HAKIM. Know that the medicine to which thou, Sir King, and many one besides, owe their recovery, is a talisman. I dip it in a cup of water, observe the fitting hour to administer it to the patient, and the potency of the draught works the cure.

KING. A most rare medicine. I marvel there is any other in use.

EL HAKIM. Painful observances, fasts, and penance are necessary on the part of the sage who uses this mode of cure ; and if through neglect of these preparations, he omits to cure at least twelve persons within the course of each moon, the virtue of the divine gift departs, and both the last patient and the physician will be exposed to speedy misfortune, neither will they survive the year. I require yet one life to make up the appointed number.

KING. Go out into the camp, good Hakim, where thou wilt find many, and do not seek to rob my headsman of *his* patients.

EL HAKIM. It is enough that, by sparing this man's life at my request, you will deliver yourself, great king, and thy servant, from a great danger.

KING. When you bid Richard Plantagenet fear that a danger will fall upon *him* from some idle omen, you speak to no dotting old woman who forgoes her purpose because a hare crosses the path, a raven croaks, or a cat sneezes.

EL HAKIM. Truth is on the tongue of thy servant. Bethink you, Lord King, though thou canst slay thousands, thou canst not restore one man to health. Beware how thou hinderest the good to humanity which thou canst not thyself render.

KING. (*Hardening.*) This is over-insolent. We took thee for our physician, not for our conscience-keeper.

EL HAKIM. (*In a lofty and commanding attitude.*) Is it thus the most renowned Prince repays benefit done to his royal person? Know, then, that through every court of Europe and Asia will I denounce thee as thankless and ungenerous!

KING. (*In fury.*) Are these terms to me, vile infidel? Art weary of thy life? (*Lays his hand on his sword.*)

EL HAKIM. Strike! Thine own deed shall then paint thee more worthless than could my words.

KING. Thankless and ungenerous! As well be termed coward and infidel. Hakim, thou hast chosen thy boon; and though I had rather thou hadst asked my crown-jewels, yet I may not, king-like, refuse thee. Take this Scot, therefore, to thy keeping. The provost will deliver him to thee on this warrant. (*He hastily traces one or two lines and gives them to Hakim.*) Use him as thy bonds slave, to be disposed of as thou wilt. Only, let him beware how he comes before the eyes of Richard.

EL HAKIM. (*Once more with reverence.*) I have heard my lord's pleasure, and to hear is to obey.

KING. It is well. Let him consult his own safety, and

never appear in my presence more. Is there aught else in which I may do thee pleasure ?

EL HAKIM. The bounty of the King hath filled my cup to the brim. May thy days be multiplied !

(Exit El Hakim after the usual deep obeisance, Richard gazing after him like one but half-satisfied.)

A FORTUNATE ESCAPE

CHARACTERS

A MAN

ALICE, *his daughter*

A STRANGER

SCENE

A miserable hovel on a wide and desolate common. Within are two persons, FATHER and DAUGHTER. The former is counting again and again a few and paltry coins.

FATHER. *(Muttering.)* There must be some mistake here, Alice. We can't be so low—you know I had two pounds in the drawer on Monday, and now—Alice, you must have stolen some of the money.

ALICE. *(Quietly.)* I did not steal any, father ; but I should like to have taken some, only I knew you would beat me if I did.

FATHER. And what do you want money for ?

ALICE. To get food when I'm hungered.

FATHER. Nothing else ?

ALICE. I don't know. Why don't you let me go and work with the other girls at the factory ? I should make money there for you and me both.

FATHER. Child, perhaps if you went to the factory, you would get away from me ; and what should I do without you ?

ALICE. (*Vacantly.*) I should like to go to the factory.

FATHER. (*Angrily.*) Stuff! I have three minds to—
(*A loud knock at the door of the hovel.*) What can that be? The hour is late—near eleven. Again—again! Ask who knocks, Alice.

STRANGER. (*Without, to Alice, who has asked her father's question through a chink in the door.*) Pray pardon me; but seeing a light at your window, I have ventured to ask if any one within will conduct me to ——. I will pay the service handsomely.

FATHER. Open the door, Alley.

(*Enter a Youth of about eighteen, carrying a small knapsack on his shoulder. He is obviously a gentleman, though his dress is plain and somewhat soiled with dust.*)

STRANGER. (*Advancing carelessly.*) I am much obliged by your civility, and trust, my good fellow, that you will increase the obligation by accompanying me to ——.

FATHER. (*Surlily.*) You can't miss your way; the lights will direct you.

STRANGER. They have rather misled me, for they seem to surround the whole common, and there is no path across it that I can see. However, if you will put me on the right road, I will not trouble you farther.

FATHER. It is very late.

STRANGER. The better reason why I should be at ——. Come, my good friend, put on your hat, and I will give you half a guinea for your trouble.

FATHER. (*Uneasily.*) Are you quite alone, sir?

STRANGER. Quite.

FATHER. Probably you are known at ——?

STRANGER. Not I. But what matters that to you? I am a stranger in these parts.

FATHER. It is full four miles.

STRANGER. (*Impatiently.*) So far, and I am fearfully tired already! (*Drawing out his watch.*) Past eleven, too!

FATHER. (*More civilly; but his evil eye sparkles at sight of the watch.*) I am thinking, sir, that as you are so tired, and the hour is so late, you might almost as well——

STRANGER. (*Petulantly.*) What?

FATHER. I don't like to mention it; but my poor roof is at your service, and I would go with you to —— at daybreak to-morrow.

STRANGER. (*Noticing that Alice is gazing at him, eager-eyed and open-mouthed.*) So be it, my host. Shut up your house again. Bring me a cup of beer and a crust of bread, and so much for supper! As for bed, this chair will do vastly well.

FATHER. Perhaps we can manage better for you than that chair. But our best accommodation must seem bad enough to a gentleman. We are very poor people—hard-working, but very poor.

STRANGER. (*Stirring the fire.*) Never mind me. I am tolerably well accustomed to greater hardships than sleeping on a chair in an honest man's house; and though you are poor, I will take it for granted you are honest. (*Alice sets the fare before the traveller, who gazes on her with undisguised admiration.*) (*To Alice.*) Prettiest of lasses, a man who has travelled on foot all day, through the ugliest country within the three seas, is sufficiently refreshed at night by the sight of so fair a face.

FATHER. Eat, sir, and no fine words.

STRANGER. I did not mean to offend you; but the fact is that I am half a foreigner, and abroad, you know, one may say a civil thing to a pretty girl without hurting her feelings, or her father's either.

FATHER. Half a foreigner! Why, you talk English as well as I do.

STRANGER. Thank you for the compliment. What I

meant was that I have been a great deal abroad ; in fact, I have just returned from Germany. But I am English born.

FATHER. And going home ?

STRANGER. Yes.

FATHER. Far from hence ?

STRANGER. About thirty miles, I believe.

FATHER. You are young, sir, to be alone. But you would like to rest now ; you can have my bed, sir ; I can sleep here.

STRANGER. (*Quickly.*) By no means. Just put a few more coals on the fire, and leave me to make myself comfortable.

(*Father leaves the room for a supply of fuel. Alice approaches the Stranger.*)

ALICE. (*Softly.*) Have you much money about you ? If you have money, don't say so to father. Don't sleep if you can help it. I'm afraid—hush—he comes !

(*Re-enter Father. While he plies the fire, Stranger sinks into a gloomy reverie, meditates upon instant flight, but decides to remain for the time being.*)

FATHER. You will sleep sound to-night.

STRANGER. Humph ! Why, I am *over-fatigued*. I dare say it will be an hour or two before I fall asleep ; but when I once *am* asleep, I sleep like a rock.

FATHER. Come, Alice, let us leave the gentleman. Good night, sir.

STRANGER. (*Yawning.*) Good night—good night.

(*Father and Alice ascend the creaking stairs. All is still.*)

STRANGER. Fool that I am. Will nothing cure me of these walking adventures ? Had it not been for that girl's big blue eyes, I should be safe at — by this time, if, indeed, the grim father had not attacked me by the road. However, we'll balk him yet. Another half-hour, and I am

on the moor : we must give him time. And in the meantime here is the poker. At the worst it is but one to one ; but the churl is strongly built.

(Father is seated at the foot of his bed, muttering. Enter to him, Alice.)

FATHER. (*To himself.*) It must be worth twenty guineas.

ALICE. What is it to you, father, what the gentleman's watch is worth ? (*He starts at the sound of her voice.*) You mean to do some injury to that young man, but you shall not.

FATHER. (*At first in a loud voice ; then in a deep growl.*) How dare you talk to me so ? Go to bed—go to bed.

ALICE. No, father.

FATHER. No ?

ALICE. I will not stir from this room until daybreak.

FATHER. (*Fiercely.*) We will soon see to that.

ALICE. Touch me, and I will alarm the gentleman, and tell him that—

FATHER. What ?

ALICE. That you intend to murder him.

FATHER. (*After a pause, in which he trembles violently and gasps painfully for breath.*) Alice, we are often nearly starving.

ALICE. I am—you never !

FATHER. Wretch, yes, if I do drink too much one day, I pinch for it the next. But go to bed, I say—I mean no harm to the young man. Think you I would twist myself a rope ?—no, no ; go along, go along.

ALICE. (*Vacantly.*) To be sure, father, they would hang you. Don't forget that ; good night. (*Exit.*)

FATHER. (*After remaining motionless for half an hour.*) If that girl would but sleep, it might be done at once. He seems quite a stranger here—nobody'll miss him. He must have plenty of money to give half a guinea to a guide

across a common ! I want money, and I won't work—if I can help it, at least. (*Looking to see that Alice's door is shut.*) All 's quiet ; perhaps he sleeps already. I will steal down. If Jack Walters would but come to-night, the job would be done charmingly. (*He creeps gently downstairs, picking up a cleaver as he goes.*) Aha ! and there 's the sledge-hammer somewhere for Walters.

(*The Stranger meanwhile deems it advisable to retreat, but finds the door locked and the key missing. As he hears steps upon the stairs, he grasps his homely weapon prepared for the worst, and is startled to find the intruder is only Alice. Enter Alice, pale as marble, her finger on her lips.*)

ALICE. (*In a whisper.*) They are in the shed behind looking for the sledge-hammer. They mean to murder you ; get you gone—quick !

STRANGER. How ?—the door is locked.

ALICE. Stay. I have taken the key from his room. (*She opens the door : he makes but one stride to the threshold. As he is going*) Don't say anything about it ; he is my father ; they would hang him.

STRANGER. No, no. But you ?—are safe, I trust ? Depend on my gratitude. I shall be at —— to-morrow—the best inn. Seek me if you can ! Which way now ?

ALICE. Keep to the left.

(*Exit Stranger rapidly. Alice lingers for an instant, then laughs aloud. As she is creeping back after closing and re-barring the door, her father and another man advance from the inner entrance.*)

FATHER. How ? Alice here, and—— Have you let him go ?

ALICE. I told you that you should not harm him.

(*Exeunt the two men, in vague pursuit of the intended victim.*)

MR. PICKWICK ENGAGES A SERVANT

CHARACTERS

MR. PICKWICK

MRS. BARDELL, *his landlady*MASTER BARDELL, *her Son*

TRACY TUPMAN

NATHANIEL WINKLE

AUGUSTUS SNODGRASS

SAM WELLER, *Mr. Pickwick's Servant*} *Friends of Mr. Pickwick*

SCENE

Mr. Pickwick's apartments in Goswell Street, MR. PICKWICK pacing the room to and fro with hurried steps. MRS. BARDELL, meanwhile, is dusting the room.

MR. PICKWICK. Mrs. Bardell——

MRS. BARDELL. Sir.

MR. PICKWICK. Your little boy is a very long time gone.

MRS. BARDELL. Why, it's a good long way to the Borough, sir.

MR. PICKWICK. Ah, very true; so it is.

(A few minutes elapse, during which Mr. Pickwick has been silent and Mrs. Bardell has resumed her dusting.)

MR. PICKWICK. Mrs. Bardell——

MRS. BARDELL. Sir.

MR. PICKWICK. Do you think it a much greater expense to keep two people than to keep one?

MRS. BARDELL. *(Colouring up to the very border of her cap, as she fancies Mr. Pickwick is going to propose to her.)* La, Mr. Pickwick, what a question!

MR. PICKWICK. Well, but *do* you?

MRS. BARDELL. That depends a good deal upon the person, you know, Mr. Pickwick; and whether it's a saving and careful person, sir.

MR. PICKWICK. That 's very true. But the person I have in my eye (*looking very hard at Mrs. Bardell*) I think possesses these qualities, and has a considerable knowledge of the world which may be of material use to me.

MRS. BARDELL. La, Mr. Pickwick !

MR. PICKWICK. (*Growing energetic.*) I do, I do indeed ; and to tell you the truth, I have made up my mind.

MRS. BARDELL. Dear me, sir.

MR. PICKWICK. (*With a good-humoured glance.*) You'll think it very strange now, that I never consulted you about this matter, and never even mentioned it till I sent your little boy out this morning—eh ?

MRS. BARDELL. (*Aside.*) He 's going to propose—sent my boy out to get him out of the way—how thoughtful ! how considerate !

MR. PICKWICK. Well, what do you think ?

MRS. BARDELL. (*Trembling with agitation.*) Oh, Mr. Pickwick, you're very kind, sir.

MR. PICKWICK. It'll save you a good deal of trouble, won't it ?

MRS. BARDELL. Oh, I never thought anything of the trouble, sir ; and, of course, I should take more trouble to please you then than ever. But it is so kind of you, Mr. Pickwick, to have so much consideration for my loneliness.

MR. PICKWICK. Ah, to be sure, I never thought of that. When I am in town, you'll always have somebody to sit with you. To be sure, so you will.

MRS. BARDELL. I'm sure I ought to be a very happy woman

MR. PICKWICK. And your little boy——

MRS. BARDELL. Bless his heart !

MR. PICKWICK. He, too, will have a companion, a lively one, who'll teach him, I'll be bound, more tricks in a week than he would ever learn in a year.

MRS. BARDELL. Oh you dear—(Mr. Pickwick *starts*)—

Oh you kind, good, playful dear. (Mrs. Bardell *flings her arms round Mr. Pickwick's neck with a flood of tears.*)

MR. PICKWICK. (*Gasping.*) Bless my soul! Mrs. Bardell, my good woman—dear me, what a situation—pray consider. Mrs. Bardell, don't—if anybody should come—

MRS. BARDELL. Oh, let them come. I'll never leave you—dear, kind, good soul.

MR. PICKWICK. (*Struggling violently.*) Mercy upon me, I hear somebody coming up the stairs. Don't, don't, there's a good creature, don't.

(Mrs. Bardell *faints in Mr. Pickwick's arms. Enter Master Bardell, Mr. Tupman, Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snodgrass. Master Bardell howls and starts kicking and pinching Mr. Pickwick.*)

MR. PICKWICK. (*In agony.*) Take this little villain away: he's mad.

MR. TUPMAN.

MR. WINKLE.

MR. SNODGRASS.

} What is the matter?

MR. PICKWICK. (*Pettishly.*) I don't know. Take away the boy. (Mr. Winkle *carries the struggling and screaming boy to the farther end of the room.*) Now, help me, lead this woman downstairs.

MRS. BARDELL. (*Faintly.*) Oh, I am better now.

MR. TUPMAN. (*Gallantly.*) Let me lead you downstairs.

MRS. BARDELL. (*Hysterically.*) Thank you, sir, thank you.

(*Exeunt Mr. Tupman, Mrs. Bardell, Master Bardell.*)

(*Re-enter Mr. Tupman.*)

MR. PICKWICK. I cannot conceive what has been the matter with that woman. I had merely announced to her my intention of keeping a man-servant when she fell into the extraordinary paroxysm in which you found her. Very extraordinary thing.

MR. TUPMAN. }
 MR. WINKLE. } Very.
 MR. SNODGRASS. }

MR. PICKWICK. Placed me in such an extremely awkward situation.

MR. TUPMAN. }
 MR. WINKLE. } Very.
 MR. SNODGRASS. }

(They cough slightly and look dubiously at each other.)

MR. TUPMAN. There is a man in the passage now.

MR. PICKWICK. It's the man I spoke to you about. I sent for him to the Borough this morning. Have the goodness to call him up, Snodgrass.

(Exit Mr. Snodgrass. Re-enter Mr. Snodgrass with Sam Weller.)

MR. PICKWICK. Sit down.

SAM. Thank'ee, sir.

MR. PICKWICK. With regard to the matter on which I, with the concurrence of these gentlemen, sent for you—

SAM. *(Interposing.)* That's the pint, sir. Out vith it, as the father said to the child, wen he swallowed a farden.

MR. PICKWICK. We want to know, in the first place, whether you have any reason to be discontented with your present situation.

SAM. Afore I answers that 'ere question, gen'l'm'n, I should like to know, in the first place, whether you're a goin' to purvide me with a better?

MR. PICKWICK. *(Smiling benevolently.)* I have half made up my mind to engage you myself.

SAM. Have you, though? *(Mr. Pickwick nods in the affirmative.)* Wages?

MR. PICKWICK. Twelve pounds a year.

SAM. Clothes?

MR. PICKWICK. Two suits.

SAM. Work?

MR. PICKWICK. To attend upon me, and travel about with me and these gentlemen here.

SAM. (*Emphatically.*) Take the bill down. I'm let to a single gentleman, and the terms is agreed upon.

MR. PICKWICK. You accept the situation?

SAM. Cert'nly. If the clothes fits me half as well as the place, they'll do.

MR. PICKWICK. You can get a character of course?

SAM. Ask the landlady o' the White Hart about that, sir.

MR. PICKWICK. Can you come this evening?

SAM. (*With alacrity.*) I'll get into the clothes this minute, if they're here.

MR. PICKWICK. Call at eight this evening, and if the inquiries are satisfactory, they shall be provided. (*Exeunt.*)

AN UNFORTUNATE CHALLENGE

CHARACTERS

NICHOLAS NICKLEBY	} <i>Members of a Theatrical Company</i>
AUGUSTUS FOLAIR	
MR. LENVILLE	
MRS. LENVILLE	
ACTORS	

SCENE I

A small bed-sitting room. NICHOLAS NICKLEBY seated at a table, writing.—A loud knock at the door. MR. FOLAIR pokes his head round the door, sees NICHOLAS, pretends to start, and enters majestically.

FOLAIR. (*Taking off his hat.*) Good evening, sir. I bring a communication. Ahem!

NICHOLAS. From whom and what about? You are unusually mysterious, to-night.

FOLAIR. Cold, perhaps. That is the fault of my position—not of myself, Mr. Johnson. My position as a mutual friend requires it, sir. (*He brings out a note from his hat.*) Have the goodness to read that, sir.

NICHOLAS. (*Reading.*) Stroke Johnson, Esq., by favour of Augustus Folair, Esq. (*He opens it and reads.*) Mr. Lenville presents his kind regards to Mr. Johnson, and will feel obliged if he will inform him at what hour to-morrow morning it will be most convenient to him to meet Mr. Lenville at the theatre, for the purpose of having his nose pulled in the presence of the company. Mr. Lenville requests Mr. Johnson not to neglect making an appointment, as he has invited two or three professional friends to witness the ceremony, and cannot disappoint them upon any account whatever. Portsmouth, Tuesday night. (*To Folair.*) Do you know the contents of this note, sir?

FOLAIR. Yes.

NICHOLAS. (*Tearing it up.*) And how dare you bring it here, sir? Had you no fear of being kicked downstairs?

FOLAIR. No.

NICHOLAS. Then (*He takes Folair's hat, and tosses it towards the door*) you had better follow that article of your dress, sir, or you may find yourself very disagreeably deceived, and that within a few seconds.

FOLAIR. (*Picking up his hat and brushing it tenderly.*) I say, Johnson, none of that you know. No tricks with a gentleman's wardrobe.

NICHOLAS. Leave the room! How could you presume to come here on such an errand, you scoundrel?

FOLAIR. Pooh! pooh! (*He unwinds his comforter.*) There—that's enough.

NICHOLAS. Enough! (*He advances threatening towards Folair.*) Take yourself off, sir.

FOLAIR. Pooh! pooh! I tell you I wasn't in earnest. I only brought it in joke.

NICHOLAS. You had better be careful how you indulge in such jokes again, or you may find an allusion to pulling noses rather a dangerous reminder for the subject of your facetiousness. Was it written in joke, too, pray?

FOLAIR. No, no, that's the best of it; right down earnest, honour bright.

NICHOLAS. Come, sir, have the goodness to explain.

FOLAIR. (*Sitting down.*) Why, I'll tell you how it is. Since you came here Lenville has done nothing but second business, and, instead of having a reception every night as he used to have, they have let him come on as if he was nobody.

NICHOLAS. What do you mean by a reception?

FOLAIR. Jupiter! What an unsophisticated shepherd you are, Johnson! Why, applause from the house when you first come on. So he has gone on night after night, never getting a hand, and you getting a couple of rounds at least, and sometimes three, till at length he got quite desperate, and had half a mind last night to play Tybalt with a real sword, and pink you—not dangerously, but just enough to lay you up for a month or two.

NICHOLAS. Very considerate.

FOLAIR. Yes, I think it was, under the circumstances; his professional reputation being at stake. But his heart failed him, and he cast about for some other way to annoy you, and making himself popular at the same time—for that's the point.

NICHOLAS. Oh, that's the point, is it?

FOLAIR. Yes, notoriety, notoriety is the thing. Bless you, if he had pinked you, it would have been worth—ah, it would have been worth eight or ten shillings a week to him.

NICHOLAS. Eight or ten shillings a week. How?

FOLAIR. Undoubtedly. All the town would have come to see the actor who nearly killed a man by mistake;

I shouldn't wonder if it had got him an engagement in London. However, he was obliged to try some other method of getting popular, and this one occurred to him.

NICHOLAS. But I don't see how this is going to benefit him.

FOLAIR. It's a clever idea, really. If you had shown the white feather, and let him pull your nose, he'd have got it into the paper; if you had sworn the peace against him, it would have been in the paper, too, and he'd have been just as much talked about as you, don't you see?

NICHOLAS. Oh, certainly; but suppose I were to turn the tables, and pull his nose, what then? Would that make his fortune?

FOLAIR. Why, I don't think it would, because there wouldn't be any romance about it, and he wouldn't be favourably known. To tell you the truth, though, he didn't calculate much upon that, for you are so mild spoken, and are so popular among the women, that we didn't suspect you of showing fight. If you did, however, he has a way of getting out of it easily, depend upon that.

NICHOLAS. Has he? We will try to-morrow morning. In the meantime, you can give whatever account of our interview you like best. Good night.

FOLAIR. Is that all you mean to say, Johnson?

NICHOLAS. Yes. Stay! I might add that I strongly suspect that you prompted Mr. Lenville in the course he has taken, and, moreover, you would probably have carried your mission with a high hand, if you had not been disconcerted by my behaviour. However, if you offend again, the penalty may be a broken head. Good night.

FOLAIR. There, that's all right, Johnson, don't alarm yourself. Good night. (*He puts on his muffler and hat, and exit.*)

CURTAIN.

SCENE II

The theatre, Portsmouth—next morning. Mr. LENVILLE surrounded by several gentlemen members of the company. Other members, ladies, in a group a few paces away. Enter FOLAIR; he crosses to LENVILLE.

FOLAIR. Lenville, you have him! I never saw a man more overcome. With fear, sir, with fear! You are made from this hour—your time is come. (*Strikes an attitude.*) There is a tide in the affairs of men—Shakespeare!

(*Enter Nicholas.*)

NICHOLAS. Good morning, ladies. (*The ladies bow.*)

LENVILLE. Ha, Ha! What puppies there are in the world, to be sure!

NICHOLAS. Oh! Are you there?

LENVILLE. (*Approaching Nicholas.*) Slave! (*He stops and hesitates—the ladies all laugh.*) Object of my scorn and hatred, I hold ye in contempt. (*Nicholas and the ladies all laugh.*) (*To the ladies.*) Minions! (*To Nicholas.*) But they shall not protect ye—boy! (*He folds his arms—aside, under his breath.*) Away with him to the deepest dungeon beneath the castle moat.

FIRST MEMBER OF THE COMPANY. (*To Second Ditto.*) But this is not what we came to see.

SECOND DITTO. No, if there is to be any nose-pulling this morning, Lenville had better hurry up.

FIRST DITTO. If Lenville doesn't mean to do it, he had better say so, and not keep them waiting.

(*Lenville turns up the coat cuff of his right sleeve, walks in a stately fashion up to Nicholas, who knocks him down. Enter Mrs. Lenville, runs and throws herself over Lenville's prostrate body, and screams.*)

LENVILLE. (*Sitting up and pointing to Mrs. Lenville.*) Do you see this, monster? Do you see this?

NICHOLAS. Come, apologize for the insolent note you wrote to me last night, and waste no more time in talking.

LENVILLE. Never !

MRS. LENVILLE. Yes, yes, yes ! For my sake, for mine, Lenville—forgo all idle forms, unless you would see me a blighted corse at your feet.

LENVILLE. This is affecting ! The ties of nature are strong. The weak husband relents. I apologize.

NICHOLAS. Humbly and submissively ?

LENVILLE. Humbly and submissively. But only to save her.—A time will come.

NICHOLAS. Very good ! When it does come you shall retract if you have the courage. There, be careful, sir, to what lengths your jealousy carries you another time ; and be careful, also, before you venture too far, to ascertain your rival's temper. (*Exit.*)

CURTAIN.

BAITING A SCHOOLMASTER

CHARACTERS

MR. CREAKLE, *Principal of 'Salem House' School*

MR. MELL, *Assistant to Mr. Creakle*

TUNGAY, *Mr. Creakle's Factotum*

STEERFORTH, *Senior Boy in the School*

TRADDLES } *Small*

DAVID } *boys*

OTHER BOYS

SCENE

The Schoolroom at Mr. Creakle's school. MR. MELL at his desk is trying to work. The pupils' desks are all awry. One boy is on a form singing ; some more are playing 'puss in the corner'. STEERFORTH, lounging with his hands in his pockets, is whistling. TRADDLES is drawing

and exhibiting skeletons. DAVID COPPERFIELD leaves his desk, goes up to MR. MELL, places a book by his side, and in dumb show indicates some difficulty. All are talking as if MR. MELL were away.

STEERFORTH. (*To boys near him.*) So old Sharp's gone out as usual to get his hair curled, and left this muff with us. Old Creakle don't seem well, either.

MELL. (*Banging David Copperfield's book on the desk.*) Silence! What does this mean? It is impossible to bear it . . . it's maddening! How can you do it to me, boys?

BOY. (*To Traddles, who has just shown a drawing.*) It's better than . . . (*Sudden quiet, the boys all look at Mr. Mell save Steerforth, who continues to whistle.*)

MELL. Silence, Mr. Steerforth.

STEERFORTH. Silence yourself. Whom are you talking to?

MELL. Sit down.

STEERFORTH. Sit down yourself, and mind your business. (*Applause and laughter, followed by silence. A boy who has darted out to play pretends he wants a pen mended.*)

MELL. If you think, Steerforth, that I am not acquainted with the power you can establish over any mind here (*he lays his hand on David Copperfield's head*) or that I have not observed you, within a few minutes, urging your juniors on to every sort of outrage against me, you are mistaken.

STEERFORTH. I don't give myself the trouble of thinking at all about you, so I'm not mistaken, as it happens.

MELL. And when you make use of your position of favouritism here, sir, to insult a gentleman—

STEERFORTH. A what? Where is he?

TRADDLES. Shame! James Steerforth! Too bad!

MELL. Hold your tongue, Traddles. (*To Steerforth.*) To insult one who is not fortunate in life, and who never gave you the least offence, and the many reasons for not insulting whom you are old enough and wise enough to

understand, you commit a mean and base action. You can sit down or stand up as you please, sir. Copperfield, go on.

STEERFORTH. Young Copperfield, stop a bit. I tell you what, Mr. Mell, once for all. When you take the liberty of calling me mean and base, or anything of that sort, you are an impudent beggar. You are always a beggar, you know; but when you do that, you are an impudent beggar. (*He stands in front of Mr. Mell, who covers his face with his hands. Enter Mr. Creakle and Tungay, behind the master's chair—sudden rigidity in the scholars—Creakle shakes Mell by the arm.*)

CREAKLE. (*Whispering.*) Mr. Mell, you have not forgotten yourself, I hope?

MELL. No, sir, no. (*Shaking his head and rubbing his hands.*) I have remembered myself, I—no, Mr. Creakle, I have not forgotten myself, I—I have remembered myself, sir. I—I—could wish you had remembered me a little sooner, Mr. Creakle. It—it—would have been more kind, sir, more just, sir. It would have saved me something. (*Creakle sits on the desk, and looks at Mr. Mell.*)

CREAKLE. (*To Steerforth.*) Now, sir, as he don't condescend to tell me, what is this?

STEERFORTH. (*After a pause.*) What did he mean by talking of favourites, then?

CREAKLE. Favourites? Who talked about favourites?

STEERFORTH. He did.

CREAKLE. (*To Mell.*) And pray, what did you mean by that, sir?

MELL. (*In a low voice.*) I meant, Mr. Creakle, as I said, that no pupil had a right to avail himself of his position of favouritism to degrade me.

CREAKLE. To degrade *you*? My stars! But give me leave to ask you, Mr. What's-your-name, whether, when you talk about favourites, you showed proper respect to

me? To me, sir, the principal of this establishment, and your employer.

MELL. It was not judicious, sir, I am willing to admit. I should not have done so, if I had been cool.

STEERFORTH. Then he said I was mean, and then he said I was base, and then I said he was a beggar. If I had been cool perhaps I should not have called him a beggar. But I did, and I am ready to take the consequences of it.

CREAKLE. I am surprised, Steerforth—although your candour does you honour, does you honour, certainly—I am surprised, Steerforth, I must say, that you should attach such an epithet to any person employed and paid in Salem House, sir. (Steerforth *laughs*.) That's not an answer, sir, to my remark. I expect more than that from you, Steerforth.

STEERFORTH. Let him deny it.

CREAKLE. Deny that he is a beggar, Steerforth? Why, where does he go a-begging?

STEERFORTH. If he's not a beggar himself, his near relation's one; it's all the same. Since you expect me, Mr. Creakle, to justify myself, and to say what I mean—what I have to say is, that his mother lives on charity in an alms-house.

MELL. (*Aside*.) Yes, I thought so!

CREAKLE. Now you hear what this gentleman says, Mr. Mell. Have the goodness to set him right before the assembled school.

MELL. He is right, sir, without correction.

CREAKLE. Be so good, then, as declare publicly, will you, whether it ever came to my knowledge, until this moment.

MELL. I believe not directly.

CREAKLE. Why, you know not, don't you, man?

MELL. I apprehend you never supposed my worldly circumstances to be very good; you know what my position is and always has been, here.

CREAKLE. I apprehend, if you come to that, that you've been in a wrong position, altogether, and mistook this for a charity school. Mr. Mell, we'll part, if you please. The sooner, the better.

MELL. (*Rising.*) There is no time like the present.

CREAKLE. Sir, to you!

MELL. I take my leave of you, Mr. Creakle, and all of you. James Steerforth, the best wish I can leave you is that you may come to be ashamed of what you have done to-day. At present, I would prefer to see you anything rather than a friend to me, or any one in whom I feel an interest. (*He takes a few things from his desk, and exit.*)

CREAKLE. (*Tungay repeating in a loud voice what he whispers.*) I thank you, Steerforth—for asserting—though perhaps too warmly—the independence and respectability—of Salem House—than which there is no better—and more highly efficient school—in all London. (*He shakes hands with Steerforth.*) Now boys, three cheers.

ALL. Hip, hip, hurrah!

DAVID. (*Aside.*) I wonder what that is for—for Steerforth, I suppose. (*Traddles bursts out crying.*)

CREAKLE. Come here, sir! (*He canes Traddles, who goes back and draws skeletons. Exeunt Creakle and Tungay.*)

STEERFORTH. I am glad, Traddles, you caught it.

TRADDLES. I don't care! Mr. Mell has been ill-used.

STEERFORTH. Who has ill-used him, you girl?

TRADDLES. Why, you have.

STEERFORTH. What have I done?

TRADDLES. What have you done? Hurt his feelings and lost him his situation.

STEERFORTH. His feelings! His feelings will soon get the better of it, I'll be bound. His feelings are not like yours, Miss Traddles. As to his situation, which was a precious one, wasn't it?—do you suppose I'm not going

to write home, and take care that he gets some money, Polly ?

CHORUS OF BOYS. Jolly good of you ! How splendid ! Good old Steerforth.

STEERFORTH. I have done this expressly for you all ; and I think I've conferred a great boon on you all, by being unselfish enough to do it.

CURTAIN.

MISS PINKERTON'S ACADEMY

CHARACTERS

MISS PINKERTON, <i>Principal of the Academy</i>	DANCING MASTER
MISS JEMIMA PINKERTON, <i>her Sister</i>	PHOEBE } <i>Servants in Miss Pinkerton's Academy</i>
AMELIA SEDLEY	MR. SEDLEY } <i>Parents of Amelia</i>
BECKY SHARP	MRS. SEDLEY } <i>Amelia</i>
MISS SALTIRE	JOSEPH SEDLEY, <i>Son of Mr. and Mrs. Sedley</i>
MISS SWARTZ	
MISS BRIGGS	
LAURA	

} *Pupils of the Academy*

S C E N E I

The Parlour in Miss Pinkerton's Academy. MISS PINKERTON seated at her desk.

MISS PINKERTON. (*Listening.*) Who can that be playing the piano so meritoriously, I wonder ? (*Rings bell.*) Surely Herr Soprano cannot be here ; this is not his day for— (*Enter Phoebe.*) Phoebe, find out who is playing the piano just now.

PHOEBE. It's that Miss Sharp, Madam. She's at it night and day now.

MISS PINKERTON. Send her to me at once, Phoebe.

PHOEBE. Very good, madam. (*Exit.*)

MISS PINKERTON. If she plays as well as that, I can

dispense with Herr Soprano, at least one day a week, and she can instruct the younger children in his place. 'Twill be a saving, for we don't pay her.

(Becky Sharp *knocks and enters at once.*)

Is this the way you enter this room, without waiting to be bidden ?

BECKY. I was told you wanted me at once.

MISS PINKERTON. But this is my private room, miss. However, I have decided to dispense with Herr Soprano's services for the juniors ; in future they will be instructed in all that pertains to a knowledge of the piano by you.

BECKY. Oh no ! There you are mistaken. I am here to speak French with the children, not to teach them music, and save money for you. Give me money, and I will teach them.

MISS PINKERTON. Do you know to whom you are speaking ? For five-and-thirty years I have never seen the individual who has dared in my own house to question my authority. (*Dramatically.*) I have nourished a viper in my bosom !

BECKY. A viper—a fiddlestick ! You took me because I was useful. There is no question of gratitude between us. I hate this place, and want to leave it. I will do nothing here but what I am obliged to do.

MISS PINKERTON. Are you aware that you are speaking to Miss Pinkerton ?

BECKY. (*Laughing.*) Ha, ha, ha ! Give me a sum of money and get rid of me. I know you would have sent me away long ago, but for the forfeit—or, if you like better, get me a good place as governess in a nobleman's family—you can do so if you please.

MISS PINKERTON. (*Aside.*) It so happens that Sir Pitt Crawley has applied to me for a governess just now. I had

better let her go. (*Aloud.*) I can do as you wish. I cannot find fault with your conduct, except to myself; and I must allow that your talents and accomplishments are of a high order. As far as the head goes, at least, you do credit to the educational system pursued at my establishment.

BECKY. Very well, madam, cancel my indentures for the remaining years and let me go.

(*A knock at the door.*)

MISS PINKERTON. Enter! (*Enter Amelia Sedley.*) It is you, Amelia. What request have you to prefer to me?

AMELIA. (*Curtseying.*) I came to inquire whether you would consider favourably a request that Miss Sharp might go home with me.

MISS PINKERTON. (*Aside.*) This is the only point in Amelia's behaviour which has not been satisfactory to her mistress. (*Aloud.*) It is unaccountable, Amelia, your liking for Miss Sharp, but, in the present conditions, I can refuse you nothing reasonable; she may go.

BECKY. Je vous remercie, mademoiselle, mille fois. Adieu. (*Exeunt Becky and Amelia.*)

SCENE II

The same. An hour or two later. Bell rings outside. Enter

MISS JEMIMA PINKERTON.

JEMIMA. It is Mrs. Sedley's coach, sister. Sambo, the black servant, has just rung the bell, and the coachman has a new red waistcoat.

MISS PINKERTON. Have you completed all the necessary preparations incident to Miss Sedley's departure, Miss Jemima?

JEMIMA. The girls were up at four this morning, packing her trunks, sister. We have made her a bow-pot.

MISS PINKERTON. Say a bouquet, sister Jemima—'tis more genteel.

JEMIMA. Well, a booky, as big almost as a haystack. I have put up two bottles of the gilly-flower water for Mrs. Sedley, and the recipe for making it, in Amelia's box.

MISS PINKERTON. And I trust, Miss Jemima, you have made a copy of Miss Sedley's account ?

JEMIMA. It's to your left, sister, on the table.

MISS PINKERTON. (*Taking up a paper.*) This is it, is it ? Very good. (*Opens it and reads.*) Ninety-three pounds four shillings. Be kind enough to address it to John Sedley, Esquire, and to seal this billet which I have written to his lady.

JEMIMA. Is it your usual letter, madam ?

MISS PINKERTON. You know, Miss Jemima, that it is my invariable custom to indite an epistle to the respected parents—or in the case of a wealthy and well-connected orphan, to the guardians—when each pupil's sojourn in this humble abode concludes ; to what end, then, that unnecessary question ?

JEMIMA. I wished only to be sure, madam, that——

MISS PINKERTON. Since you have been so officious, you will now, I beg, read it once more to me, that I may judge whether it is worthy of a humble friend of the great Lexicographer.

JEMIMA. (*Opening the letter and reading.*) The Mall, Chiswick, June 15, 1813. Madam, After her six years' residence at the Mall, I have the honour and happiness of presenting Miss Amelia Sedley to her parents, as a young lady not unworthy to occupy a fitting position in their polished and refined circle. . . . In music, in dancing, in orthography, in every variety of embroidery and needle-work, she will be found to have realized her friends' fondest wishes. In geography there is still much to be desired ;

and a careful and undeviating use of the backboard for four hours daily during the next three years, is recommended as necessary to the acquirement of that dignified deportment and carriage, so requisite for every young lady of fashion. . . . In leaving the Mall, Miss Amelia carries with her the hearts of her companions, and the affectionate regards of her mistress, who has the honour to subscribe herself, Madam, your most obliged humble servant, Barbara Pinkerton. P.S. Miss Sharp accompanies Miss Sedley. It is particularly requested that Miss Sharp's stay in Russell Square may not exceed ten days. The family of distinction to whom I have recommended her, desire to avail themselves of her services as soon as possible.

MISS PINKERTON. Yes, not unworthy, not unworthy. Jemima, fetch a copy of the Dictionary. (*Jemima goes to a cupboard and fetches two copies.*) You have it?

JEMIMA. Here it is, sister. (*She puts one copy down.*)

MISS PINKERTON. (*Writing.*) Miss Amelia Sedley . . . Miss Pinkerton . . . Miss Jemima Pinkerton. Yes, that great P is not unworthy of this genteel establishment. Now where are the verses. (*Searches her desk.*) Ah! (*Reads.*) Lines addressed to a young lady on quitting Miss Pinkerton's school at the Mall, by the late revered Doctor Samuel Johnson. (*Jemima timidly hands the second volume.*)

JEMIMA. Hem!

MISS PINKERTON. (*Coldly.*) For whom is this, Miss Jemima?

JEMIMA. For Becky Sharp. (*She trembles, and turns her back to her sister.*) For Becky Sharp; she is going too.

MISS PINKERTON. Miss Jemima! are you in your senses? Are you not aware that Miss Sharp is an articed pupil, and that I have compromised my dignity quite sufficiently by allowing her to remain so long in this

establishment, without conferring upon her at parting the high honour of the Dictionary. Replace the book, therefore, in the closet, and never venture to take such a liberty in future.

JEMIMA. Well, sister, it's only two and ninepence, and poor Becky will be miserable if she don't get one.

MISS PINKERTON. Send Miss Sedley instantly to me—and tell Phoebe to bring the cake and wine. (*Exit Miss Jemima.*) Oh! I forgot. (*Rings bell. Enter Servant.*)

SERVANT. Madam.

MISS PINKERTON. Are all Miss Sedley's trunks and boxes downstairs?

SERVANT. They are, madam.

MISS PINKERTON. And Phoebe, is she bringing the refreshments? (*A knock at the door.*)

SERVANT. I suspect this is she, madam.

MISS PINKERTON. Enter. (*Enter Becky Sharp.*) (*To Servant.*) You may retire. (*Exit Servant.*)

BECKY. Mademoiselle, je viens vous faire mes adieux.

MISS PINKERTON. (*Aside.*) Why does she speak French to me, when she knows I don't understand it? (*Tossing her head.*) Miss Sharp, I wish you a good morning. (*She waves her hand, and holds out two fingers. Enter Miss Sedley with Miss Jemima behind. Becky ignores the fingers.*) Heaven bless you, my child! (*She embraces Miss Sedley.*)

MISS JEMIMA. Come away, Becky. (*Exeunt Jemima and Becky.*)

MISS PINKERTON. On this momentous occasion, my sweet child, when you are leaving my care for the responsibilities of the world outside, I consider it my bounden duty as well as my great privilege to address to you some words of counsel as well as of warning——

CURTAIN, *while she is speaking.*

S C E N E I I I

The Hall of Miss Pinkerton's Academy. Large pile of luggage in the centre. Two men engaged in carrying it out. A large bouquet held by a page boy. Enter MISS AMELIA SEDLEY followed by a number of girls, and servants. The servants cross the stage, the girls crowd round AMELIA—BECKY in the background.

MISS SALTIRE. Send my letters under cover to my grandpa, the Earl of Dexter, dearest Amelia ; good-bye.

MISS SWARTZ. Never mind the postage, but write every day, you darling. (*Bursts out crying.*)

LAURA. (*Holding Amelia's hand.*) Amelia, when I write I shall call you mama, for I have no mama of my own, you know.

MISS BRIGGS. (*Aside.*) The only girl I ever liked out of the whole lot of them ; the rest are mean spiteful things ; and now she is going.

MISS SWARTZ. Oho ! oho ! (*She falls into hysterics.*)

(*Enter Miss Pinkerton.*)

MISS PINKERTON. Young ladies, young ladies, what is all this commotion about ?

ALL. (*Curtseying.*) If you please, madam, Miss Swartz is in hysterics.

MISS PINKERTON. Oh, my dear dear pupil ! Carry her out tenderly. Miss Jemima, Miss Jemima, where is Miss Jemima ? Fetch the sal volatile, some one, and, oh ! you Phoebe, run at once and fetch Dr. Floss. (*Miss Swartz is carried out.*) Dear, dear ! my dear pupil, and on this day of all ! (*Exit—followed by some of the pupils, who return by degrees during the next few speeches.*)

MISS BRIGGS. (*Aside.*) Yes, it's easy to see that it is because she has a hundred-thousand pounds of her own ! For all that, she's a horrid mulatto. Now, if I had hysterics

Miss Pinkerton would only say: 'Miss Briggs, that is conduct unbecoming to a lady;' and send me to my room. (*Enter the Dancing Master, with his hat on; he takes it off, and makes a sweeping movement with it as he bows.*)

DANCING MASTER. Am I indeed just in time to be allowed to say farewell to the most accomplished of my pupils? My dear mademoiselle. (*He kisses his fingers.*) I kiss your hand. (*He does so.*)

AMELIA. You are very good, M. le Professeur. (*She curtseys, and moves to the door.*)

ALL GIRLS AND SERVANTS. Good-bye, dear. Good-bye, Miss. (*Exit Amelia—Becky crosses to go out.*)

(*Enter Jemima in a hurry.*)

JEMIMA. Stop, stop a minute! (*Becky stops and turns.*) It's some sandwiches, my dear, that is, Miss Sharp; and, Becky, here's a book for you that my sister, that is, I—Johnson's Dictionary, you know; you mustn't leave us without that. Good-bye. God bless you. (*She turns, sniffs, and wipes her eyes. Becky flings the book at her feet and exit.*) Well (*gasping*), well I never! what an audacious——(*A bell rings 'off'.* *Enter Miss Pinkerton.*)

MISS PINKERTON. Young ladies, the bell sounds for the dancing lesson.

CURTAIN.

SCENE IV

A room in Mr. Sedley's house. Enter AMELIA and BECKY.

BECKY. Thank Heaven, I'm out of Chiswick!

AMELIA. How could you, Becky? To throw Johnson's Dictionary on the floor!

BECKY. Why, did you think Miss Pinkerton would come and order me back to the black hole? (*She laughs.*)

AMELIA. No, but——

BECKY. I hate the whole house! I hope I may never set eyes on it again! I wish it were at the bottom of the Thames, I do (*she sits down*); and if Miss Pinkerton were there, I wouldn't pick her out, I wouldn't. Oh, how I should like to see her floating in the water yonder, turban and all, with her train streaming after her and her nose like the beak of a wherry!

AMELIA. Hush, oh hush!

BECKY. There's nobody to hear; and even if there were, anybody may go back and tell Miss Pinkerton that I hate her with all my soul. For two years I have only had insults and outrage from her. I have been treated worse than any servant in the kitchen. I have never had a friend or a kind word, except from you. But that talking French to Miss Pinkerton was capital fun, wasn't it? She doesn't know a word of French, and was too proud to confess it.

(*Enter Joseph Sedley in buckskins.*)

JOSEPH. I beg your pardon, ladies, I—er—haven't the pleasure—er—ahem! (*He holds out his hand.*)

AMELIA. It's only your sister, Joseph; I've come home for good, you know (*She shakes hands with Joseph*); and this is my friend, Miss Sharp, whom you have heard me mention. (*Becky curtseys.*)

JOSEPH. No, never, upon my word—that is, yes—what abominably cold weather, Miss. (*He pokes the fire.*)

BECKY. (*To Amelia.*) He's very handsome.

AMELIA. Do you think so? I'll tell him.

BECKY. Darling, not for worlds.

AMELIA. Thank you for the beautiful Indian shawls, brother. Are they not beautiful, Rebecca?

BECKY. Oh, heavenly!

AMELIA. I can't make you such handsome presents, Joseph; but while I was at school I embroidered for you a very beautiful pair of braces.

JOSEPH. (*In alarm.*) What do you mean, Amelia? (*He tugs at the bell and breaks the rope.*) For heaven's sake go and see if my buggy is at the door! I can't wait, I must go, I must go.

(*Enter Mr. Sedley.*)

SEDLEY. What's the matter, Emmy?

AMELIA. Joseph wants me to see if his—his buggy is at the door. What is a buggy, papa?

SEDLEY. It's a one-horse palanquin. (*Joseph bursts out laughing. Mr. Sedley turns to Amelia.*) This young lady is your friend? Miss Sharp, I am happy to see you. Have you and Emmy been quarrelling with Joseph already, that he wants to go?

JOSEPH. I promised Bonamy of our service, sir, to dine with him.

(*Enter Mrs. Sedley.*)

MRS. SEDLEY. O fie! Didn't you tell your mother you would dine here?

JOSEPH. But in this dress? It's impossible.

SEDLEY. Look at him, isn't he handsome enough to dine anywhere, Miss Sharp? (*Becky and Amelia look at each other and giggle.*) Did you ever see a pair of buckskins like these at Miss Pinkerton's? (*The ladies laugh into their handkerchiefs.*)

JOSEPH. Gracious heaven, Father!

SEDLEY. There now, I've hurt his feelings. Mrs. Sedley, my dear, I have hurt your son's feelings. I have alluded to his buckskins. Ask Miss Sharp if I have not! Come, Joseph, be friends with Miss Sharp, and let us all go to dinner.

MRS. SEDLEY. There's a pillau, Joseph, just as you like it, and papa has brought home the best turbot in Billingsgate.

SEDLEY. Come, come, sir, walk downstairs with Miss Sharp, and I will follow with these two young women.

CURTAIN.

A TRIANGULAR DUEL.

CHARACTERS

EASTHUPP, *Purser's Steward*BIGGS, *Boatswain*TALLBOYS, *Gunner*

JACK EASY	} <i>Midshipmen</i>
GASCOIGNE	

All of H.M.S. *Harpy*

SCENE I

The deck of H.M.S. Harpy: JACK EASY talking apart to his servant: MR. EASTHUPP and MR. BIGGS pacing the deck.

EASTHUPP. It's my pecooliar hopinion that a gentleman should behave as a gentleman, and that if a gentleman professes hopinions of hequality and such liberal sentiments, that he is bound as a gentleman to hact up to them.

BIGGS. Very true, Mr. Easthupp; he is bound to act up to them; and not because a person, who was a gentleman as well as himself, happens not to be on the quarter-deck, to insult him because he has only perferred opinions like his own. (*He looks at Easy.*)

EASTHUPP. I should like to see the fellow who would have done so on shore; however, the time will come-when I can hagain pull on my plain coat, and then the hinsult shall be vashed out in blood, Mr. Biggs.

JACK. (*Aside.*) This is too plain to be misunderstood. (*Aloud—walking up to Biggs, and politely lifting his hat.*) If I mistake not, Mr. Biggs, your conversation refers to me.

BIGGS. Very likely it does; listeners hear no good of themselves.

EASTHUPP. It happens that gentlemen can't converse without being vatched.

EASY. It is not the first time that you have thought proper to make very offensive remarks, Mr. Biggs; and as you appear to consider yourself ill-treated, I can only say (*Bowing*) I shall be most happy to give you satisfaction.

BIGGS. (*Pointing to Easthupp.*) This is the gentleman whom you have insulted, Mr. Easy.

EASTHUPP. Yes, Mr. Heasy, quite as good a gentleman as yourself, although I ave ad misfortune. I ham of as hold a family as hany in the country; many a year did I valk Bond Street, and I ave as good blood in my weins as you, Mr. Heasy, halthough I ave been misfortunate—I've ad hadmirals in my family.

BIGGS. You have grossly insulted this gentleman, and notwithstanding all your talk of equality, you are afraid to give him satisfaction—you shelter yourself under your quarter-deck.

EASY. (*Angrily.*) Mr. Biggs, I shall go on shore directly we arrive at Malta. Let you, and this fellow, put on plain clothes, and I will meet you both—and then I'll show you whether I am afraid to give satisfaction.

BIGGS. One at a time.

EASY. No, sir, not one at a time, but both at the same time. I will fight both or none. (*Exit Easy. Enter Tallboys.*)

BIGGS. Whom shall I ask to be my second? (*Sees Tallboys.*) Ah, Mr. Tallboys, I am engaged to fight a duel with Mr. Easy. Will you be my second?

EASTHUPP. And me too: we are both going to fight him at once.

TALLBOYS. Both at once! I will be your second, certainly, but how am I to arrange for three to fight at the same time? I must go and read up the subject. (*Exit.*)

BIGGS. That will be all right. But I must attend to my duty. I must walk aft. (*Exeunt.*)

(*Enter Jack and Gascoigne.*)

GASCOIGNE. Of course I'll act for you, but I think it excessively *infra dig.* of you even to meet the Boatswain ; but as the challenge has been given there is no retracting. There 's sure to be some fun in it ; come on : let 's go below. (*Exeunt.*)

CURTAIN.

SCENE II

A Spot on Shore, behind a Cooper's shop. Enter TALLBOYS and GASCOIGNE.

TALLBOYS. Mr. Gascoigne, I have been very much puzzled how this duel should be fought, but I have at last found it out. You see there are three parties to fight ; had there been two or four there would have been no difficulty, as the right line or square might guide us in that instance ; but we must arrange it upon the triangle in this.

GASCOIGNE. The triangle, Mr. Tallboys ?

TALLBOYS. Are you aware, Mr. Gascoigne, of the properties of an equilateral triangle ?

GASCOIGNE. Yes, that it has three equal sides. But what has that to do with the duel ?

TALLBOYS. Everything, Mr. Gascoigne. It has resolved the great difficulty ; indeed the duel between three can be fought only upon that principle. (*He makes a triangle on the ground.*) You observe in this figure we have three points, each equidistant from each other ; and we have three combatants—so that placing one at each point, it is all fair play for the three ; Mr. Easy, for instance, stands here, the boatswain here, and the purser's steward at the third corner. Now, if the distance is fairly measured, it will be all right.

GASCOIGNE. But then, how are they to fire ?

TALLBOYS. It certainly is not of much consequence, but still, as sailors, it appears to me that they should fire with the sun ; that is, Mr. Easy fires at Mr. Biggs, Mr. Biggs fires at Mr. Easthupp, and Mr. Easthupp fires at Mr. Easy ; so you perceive that each party has his shot at one, and at the same time receives the fire of another.

GASCOIGNE. (*Hiding a smile.*) Upon my word, Mr. Tallboys, I give you great credit ; you have a profound mathematical head, and I am delighted with your arrangement. Of course, in these affairs, the principals are bound to comply with the arrangements of the seconds, and I shall insist upon Mr. Easy consenting to your excellent and scientific proposal.

(*Enter from one side Easy, from the other the Boatswain.*)

GASCOIGNE. Here, Jack, let me explain what Mr. Tallboys and I have arranged. (*They converse apart, and soon both are convulsed with mirth.*)

TALLBOYS. Mr. Biggs, you will be placed at the corners of an equilateral triangle, and will each shoot at one other while receiving the fire of the third.

BIGGS. (*Scratching his head.*) I don't comprehend very well, but I daresay it 's all right—shot for shot. I'll fetch Mr. Easthupp. (*Exit. Gascoigne marks out a triangle of twelve paces, Mr. Tallboys checking it. Easy takes up his position. Re-enter Biggs with Easthupp.*)

TALLBOYS. (*To Biggs.*) This is your place (*He indicates his position*) and Mr. Easthupp, this is your place. (*He indicates the third place.*)

EASTHUPP. But Mr. Tallboys, I don't hunderstand this. Mr. Heasy will first fight Mr. Biggs, will he not ?

TALLBOYS. No, this is a duel of three. You will fire at Mr. Easy, Mr. Easy will fire at Mr. Biggs, and Mr. Biggs will fire at you. It is all arranged, Mr. Easthupp.

EASTHUPP. But I do not understand it. Why is Mr. Biggs to fire at me? I have no quarrel with Mr. Biggs.

TALLBOYS. Because Mr. Easy fires at Mr. Biggs, and Mr. Biggs must have his shot as well.

GASCOIGNE. If you have ever been in the company of gentlemen, Mr. Easthupp, you must know something about duelling.

EASTHUPP. Yes, yes; I've kept the best company, Mr. Gascoigne, and I can give a gentleman satisfaction; but——

GASCOIGNE. Then sir, if that is the case, you must know that your honour is in the hands of your second, and that no gentleman appeals.

EASTHUPP. Yes, yes, I know that, Mr. Gascoigne; but still I've no quarrel with Mr. Biggs, and therefore, Mr. Biggs, of course you will not aim at me.

BIGGS. Why, you don't think I am going to be fired at for nothing? No, no, I'll have my shot anyhow.

EASTHUPP. But at your friend, Mr. Biggs?

BIGGS. All the same, I shall fire at somebody; shot for shot, and hit the luckiest.

EASTHUPP. Vel, gentlemen, I purtest against these proceedings. I came here to have satisfaction from Mr. Heasy, and not to be fired at by Mr. Biggs.

TALLBOYS. Don't you have satisfaction when you fire at Mr. Easy? What more would you have?

EASTHUPP. I purtest against Mr. Biggs firing at me.

GASCOIGNE. So you would have a shot without receiving one; the fact is, that this fellow's a confounded coward.

EASTHUPP. (*Holding out his hand for the pistol.*) You ear these words, Mr. Biggs? pretty language to use to a gentleman. I purtest no longer, Mr. Tallboys; death before dishonour. I'm a gentleman I ham! (*The combatants are placed, Easthupp trembling violently.*)

TALLBOYS. (*In a loud voice.*) Cock your locks! Take good aim at your object—fire.

(*Jack hits the Boatswain in the mouth; the latter claps his hand to the place. Biggs hits Easthupp, who rolls on the ground howling. Easthupp fires wildly and wide.*)

TALLBOYS. (*To Easthupp.*) Hold your bawling, or you'll have the guard down here; you're not hurt.

EASTHUPP. Hain't Hi? Oh, let me die, let me die; don't move me!

GASCOIGNE. I don't think he can move, Mr. Tallboys; I should think the best plan would be to call up two of the men from the shop, and let them take him to the hospital. (*Exit Tallboys.*)

BIGGS. (*Coming up, his head tied in a handkerchief.*) What are you making such a howling about? Look at me. How am I to pipe to dinner when I'm ordered, all my wind 'scaping through the cheeks. (*Turning to Jack.*) A wicked shot of yours, Mr. Easy.

EASY. I really am very sorry, and beg to offer my best apology.

EASTHUPP. Oh, dear, oh dear, what a fool I was. Hi'll hamend and lead a good life.

(*Re-enter Tallboys with two men; the latter carry Easthupp off, and are followed by Tallboys and Biggs.*)

GASCOIGNE. Well, Easy, I'll be shot, but we're in a pretty scrape; I'll be hanged if I care, it's the best bit of fun I ever met with. Ha, ha, ha——

JACK. Ha, ha, ha——(*Exeunt, arm in arm.*)

CURTAIN.

CRANFORD SOCIETY

CHARACTERS

MISS DEBORAH JENKYNs } *Daughters of the late*
 MISS MATILDA JENKYNs } *Rector of Cranford*
 MISS SMITH, a *Friend*
 MISS BETTY BARKER, a *retired milliner*
 MISS POLE
 CAPTAIN BROWN, a *retired soldier*
 MISS BROWN
 MISS JESSIE BROWN } *his daughters*
 MRS. JAMIESON
 MRS. FORRESTER
 JENNY } *Servants*
 PEGGY }

SCENE I

Miss Jenkyns' drawing-room. Dim light as the candles are unlighted. MISS JENKYNs, MISS MATILDA JENKYNs, and MISS SMITH stand holding 'lighters'. Card tables displayed. JENNY, the servant, standing.

MISS JENKYNs. Now don't forget, Jenny, that you always reply 'yes ma'am' when I speak in front of the ladies; and you must announce the visitors properly, as I instructed you yesterday.

JENNY. I 'ont forget, for sure!

MISS JENKYNs. Jenny!

JENNY. I mean, yes mum.

MISS JENKYNs. When I ring, Jenny, you will convey the tea equipages to the parlour here, and place them on—
(A knock is heard 'off'.) Run, Jenny, and don't—*(Exit Jenny. All three ladies begin hastily to light the candles.)*
 Oh, she's gone, and I'm sure she'll be guilty of some breach of etiquette.

MISS MATTY. *(Pausing.)* Shall I go, Deborah, and—?

MISS JENKYNs. Matilda! Certainly not!

MISS MATTY. (*Resuming her occupation.*) I fear we did not watch closely, last night ; this candle is shorter than any of the others. Perhaps we had better do without it ; what do you think, Deborah ?

MISS JENKYNs. As you like, Matilda.

MISS MATTY. We do not want to be accused of vulgar ostentation, do we, sister ? And I think six candles for a party in keeping with our desire to observe elegant economy.

MISS SMITH. (*Aside.*) Dear Miss Matty, she always is economical over the candles.

(*Re-enter Jenny, followed by Miss Betty Barker.*)

JENNY. Miss Betty Barker, yes mum !

MISS JENKYNs. Ahem ! (*Miss Barker curtsseys to the ladies. Miss Jenkyns looks at Jenny going out.*)

MISS MATTY. Did you come in the chair, Miss Barker ?

MISS BARKER. No, ma'am ; the night was so fine, that I found the air most refreshing after a day indoors.

MISS JENKYNs. I am glad to see you at our little gathering in honour of Miss Smith.

(*Another knock ' off '.*)

MISS MATTY. That will be Miss Pole, I think.

(*Enter Jenny, followed by Miss Pole.*)

JENNY. Miss Pole. (*Exit Jenny. Miss Pole curtsseys to the company.*)

MISS JENKYNs. Miss Pole, I am happy to see you.

MISS MATTY. (*Aside.*) Come, that is good ; now we can have a game of preference.

MISS JENKYNs. Will you ladies make up a table ?—Miss Pole, Miss Barker, Miss Smith, you will take a hand ? And Matilda ; I will stand out to receive our other guests.

MISS POLE.

MISS BARKER.

} (*Together.*) Very pleased, I am sure.

MISS SMITH. I will, if you like, only I'm not a good hand at——

MISS MATTY. Oh, come along, my dear, I'm sure you can play well. *(They sit and begin.)*

MISS JENKYNs. Dear me, the fire is smoking badly ; it must be the chimney, or perhaps it is the wind.

MISS POLE. But there is no wind, Miss Jenkyns.

(Another knock. Enter Captain Brown, Miss Brown, and Miss Jessie Brown. Jenny in front.)

JENNY. Captain Brown, Miss Brown, and Miss Jessie. *(Exit Jenny.)*

MISS JENKYNs. Miss Brown, I am pleased to see you, and Miss Jessie. Captain Brown, I am honoured. *(She rings.)*

CAPTAIN BROWN. Faugh, your chimney is smoking, ma'am ; may I be permitted to see if I can set it right ?

MISS JENKYNs. It's making a deal of trouble, Captain, and you will soil your hands.

CAPTAIN BROWN. That's all right, ma'am.

(He alters the 'register' and the fire burns without smoking. The ladies at the table watch—he dusts his hands.)

MISS POLE. *(In a subdued tone.)* Just like a man !

MISS BARKER. Yes, even a man is useful sometimes.

CAPTAIN BROWN. There, that is nicely now, ma'am.

(Enter Jenny with the tea-tray.)

MISS JENKYNs. Thank you so much, Captain Brown.

(Another knock. Exit Jenny, returning to announce.)

JENNY. The Honourable Mrs. Jamieson.

(Exit Jenny, to return with another tray.)

MISS JENKYNs. Madam, I am gratified that you have recovered sufficiently to honour us with a visit.

MRS. JAMIESON. Thank you, but my poor doggie is still causing me great anxiety.

(*Tea is served ; the four ladies stop the game. Captain Brown hands tea, &c.*)

MRS. JAMIESON. What is this I hear, Miss Barker, about your Alderney ?

MISS BARKER. (*Holding handkerchief to her eyes.*) My poor cow ! The creature fell into a lime-pit, and though she was soon heard when she moored, and rescued, she has lost most of her hair ; now she looks cold and miserable. What I am to do with her, I don't know !

MISS POLE. Why not give her a bath of oil ?

MISS BARKER. I might try it, if I could manage. What do you think, Captain Brown ?

CAPTAIN BROWN. Get her a flannel waistcoat and flannel trousers, ma'am, if you wish to keep her alive. But my advice is, kill the poor creature at once.

MISS BARKER. (*Brightening.*) Oh, thank you, Captain Brown, I shall carry out your suggestion at once. Thank you so much.

CAPTAIN BROWN. Not at all, ma'am. (*Aside.*) I never expected she'd take me at my word—what an extraordinary sight it will be. (*He stifles a laugh.*)

(*Miss Jenkyns rings the bell, Jenny enters.*)

MISS JENKYNs. Remove the soiled china, Jenny.

MISS POLE. I vow I am becoming as much absorbed in crochet as I was once in knitting ; but I am at my wits' end to match some Shetland wool.

MISS JESSIE. Would you allow me to assist you, ma'am ?

MISS JENKYNs. Shall we resume our game, ladies and Captain Brown ? You already have one table, Matilda ; if Mrs. Jamieson, Captain Brown, and you two ladies would make another——

MISS JESSIE. Thank you, but I am sorry to say I don't play.

CAPTAIN BROWN. Miss Brown and I shall be happy, if you will make the fourth.

MISS JENKYNs. Very well, then, I will complete the table:

MISS POLE. (*To Jessie.*) How do you think you can help me, Miss Jessie? (*They sit for cards.*)

MISS JESSIE. I have an uncle, my mother's brother, who is a shopkeeper in Edinburgh.

MISS JENKYNs. Ahem! ahem! (*Aside.*) With the Honourable Mrs. Jamieson present, she might have been more discreet.

MISS JESSIE. I assure you I can easily get you the identical wool required. My uncle has the best assortment of Shetland goods of any one in Edinburgh.

MISS JENKYNs. (*Hurriedly to Captain Brown.*) You will not mind playing for threepenny points?

CAPTAIN BROWN. Not in the least, ma'am, if it is acceptable to you.

MISS JENKYNs. Will you give us some music, Miss Jessie? (*Aside.*) It will take the sound of the shopkeeper out of our ears.

MISS JESSIE. If you would like it, ma'am, though I assure you I play indifferently.

(*She plays—Miss Jenkyns beats time out of time with her feet.*)

Presently, Jenny reappears with biscuits and wine. The players rise, discuss the game, &c.)

CAPTAIN BROWN. Have you seen any numbers of the *Pickwick Papers*? Capital thing.

MISS JENKYNs. Yes, I have seen them; indeed I may say I have read them.

CAPTAIN BROWN. And what do you think of them? Aren't they famously good?

MISS JENKYNs. I must say I don't think they are by any means equal to Dr. Johnson. Still, perhaps the author is young. Let him persevere, and who knows what he may become if he will take the great Doctor for his model.

CAPTAIN BROWN. It is quite a different sort of thing, madam.

MISS JENKYNs. I am quite aware of that, and I make allowances, Captain Brown.

CAPTAIN BROWN. Just allow me to read you a scene out of this month's number.

MISS JENKYNs. As you please, but Dr. Johnson's style is a model for young beginners—I have formed my own style upon it ; I recommend it to your favourite.

CAPTAIN BROWN. I should be very sorry for him to exchange his style for any such pompous writing.

MISS JENKYNs. (*With dignity.*) I prefer Dr. Johnson to Mr. Boz.

CAPTAIN BROWN. (*Under his breath.*) Hang Dr. Johnson ! (*The ladies start.*)

MRS. JAMIESON. I think I hear men's voices outside. I think I must be ready in case it is my chair.

MISS POLE. } I must be departing, too.
MISS BARKER. }

MISS JENKYNs. Matilda, will you see to the ladies ? I think Jenny has retired.

(*Exit Miss Matty and the ladies. Miss Jenkyns attends to the grate ; Captain Brown whistles under his breath ; Miss Jessie re-enters.*)

MISS JESSIE. We are quite ready, father.

MISS JENKYNs. I will come and bid you all good-night.

(*Captain Brown opens the door, and bows as she goes out. She passes him with a very slight inclination.*)

CURTAIN.

SCENE II

Two years later. Miss Betty Barker's sitting-room. MISS BARKER and PEGGY, her maid, are putting the finishing touches to the room. A knock heard.

MISS BARKER. Wait, Peggy ! Wait till I've run upstairs and washed my hands. When I cough, open the door ; I'll not be a minute. (*Exit.*)

PEGGY. Yes, ma'am. (*Cough heard. Peggy goes out as Miss Barker enters and seats herself.*)

VOICE. (*Outside.*) After you, ma'am.

(*Enter Mrs. Forrester, Miss Pole, Miss Matty Jenkyns, and Miss Smith. They pass over and exeunt, returning in indoor attire.*)

MISS BARKER. How do you do, Mrs. Forrester? (*They curtsey*) and Miss Matilda Jenkyns? (*They curtsey.*) Miss Pole and Miss Smith, I hope you are well. (*Mutual curtseys.*) Please be seated. (*To Miss Smith, who goes to sit in the best chair.*) Not there, let me beg of you; that is Mrs. Jamieson's seat.

MISS MATTY. Mrs. Jamieson is coming, I think you said?

MISS BARKER. Yes. Mrs. Jamieson most kindly and condescendingly said she would be happy to come. One little stipulation she made, that she should bring Carlo. I told her that if I had a weakness, it was for dogs.

MISS MATTY. Mrs. Fitz-Adam, I suppose——

MISS BARKER. No, madam. I must draw a line somewhere. Mrs. Jamieson would not, I think, like to meet Mrs. Fitz-Adam. I have the greatest respect for Mrs. Fitz-Adam, but I cannot think her fit society for such ladies as Mrs. Jamieson and Miss Matilda Jenkyns. (*Aside.*) I understand the difference of ranks, though I *am* a retired milliner.

MISS POLE. Still, as we are for the most part elderly spinsters, if we do not relax a little and become less exclusive, by and by we shall have no society at all.

MRS. FORRESTER. I am inclined to agree. Besides, no one who had not good blood in her veins would dare to be called Fitz.

MISS BARKER. I do hope Mrs. Jamieson will not be long; she promised—kindly—not to delay her visit beyond half-past six.

(*Knock outside. Enter Peggy.*)

PEGGY. The Honourable Mrs. Jamieson.

(*Miss Barker conducts her off, and returns with her in indoor costume.*)

MISS BARKER. I am greatly honoured, ma'am ; pray take that seat, ma'am. Is the fire to your liking ?

MRS. JAMIESON. You are very civil, ma'am, I am vastly obliged.

(*Enter Peggy with the tea-tray.*)

MISS BARKER. (*Aside.*) I hope Peggy will keep her distance. (*Peggy makes signs to her.*) There, she is making signs ; what can she want ?

MRS. JAMIESON. Don't you ladies find it unpleasant walking ?

MISS SMITH. (*Aside.*) Kind of her, when she always engages the only chair.

MISS BARKER. (*Thinking of Peggy.*) Not in the least—especially as it is raining ! (*Aside.*) What does she want ? (*Sees Carlo.*) Ah I have it ! (*Aloud.*) Poor sweet Carlo ! I'm forgetting him. Come downstairs with me, poor ittie doggie, and it shall have its tea, it shall ! (*Turns to go, followed by Peggy.*)

PEGGY. (*As she goes.*) I wanted to ask you, ma'am if——

MISS BARKER. Sssh ! (*Exeunt.*)

MISS POLE. I hear that sugar has just gone up in price.

MISS MATTY. Dear me ! And preserving time so nigh. It's very tiresome of them. Why couldn't they have put it off for a month or so ?

(*Re-enter Miss Barker. Tea is served.*)

MISS BARKER. (*To Mrs. Jamieson.*) Ma'am, what will you take ?

MRS. JAMIESON. Seed-cake, thank you. (*Aside to Miss Pole.*) I never have it in *my* house ; it reminds me of

scented soap. But I am indulgent towards Miss Barker ; she does not know the customs of high life.

MISS POLE. I hear that Signor Brunoni is going to exhibit his wonderful magic in the Assembly Rooms next week.

MISS MATTY. Such a piece of gaiety has not been seen or known of since Wombwell's lions came, when one of them ate a little child's arm. I shall have to see about a new cap.

MISS POLE. Turbans are being worn, I believe.

MISS SMITH. (*To Mrs. Forrester.*) That is a beautiful piece of lace on your collar.

MRS. FORRESTER. Yes, such lace cannot be got for love or money ; I daren't even trust the washing of it to my maid. Once it had a narrow escape. I have a very good receipt for washing it in milk. Well, I had tacked it together, and put it to soak in milk, when, unfortunately, I left the room. On my return, I found pussy on the table, gulping, as if she were half choked. At first I pitied her, till all at once I saw the cup of milk empty—cleaned out !

MISS SMITH. What ! The lace gone ?

MRS. FORRESTER. 'You naughty cat,' said I, and I believe I gave her a slap, which helped the lace down. I hoped it might disagree with her ; but it would have been too much for Job if he had seen that cat come in purring, not a quarter of an hour after. Then a thought struck me ; I rang the bell for my maid, and sent her to Mr. Hoggins—that's the surgeon, you know—with my compliments, and would he lend me one of his top-boots.

MISS SMITH. His top-boots ! *Whatever* for ?

MRS. FORRESTER. When it came, Jenny and I put pussy in, and gave her a teaspoonful of currant jelly in which (you must excuse me) I had mixed some tartar emetic.

MISS SMITH. Tartar emetic ! Oh. (*Laughs.*)

MRS. FORRESTER. I could have kissed her when she returned the lace to sight. And you would never guess it had been in pussy's inside !

(Meanwhile the other ladies have been conversing in dumb-show together over their tea.)

MISS MATTY. *(As if in response to a request.)* Very well, then, I will tell you. My great fear, ever since I was a girl, is that I may be caught by the last leg just as I am getting into bed—by some one concealed under it. When I was younger and more active I used to take a flying leap from a distance, but I gave it up, it annoyed Deborah.

CHORUS OF LADIES. What do you do now, Miss Matty ?

MISS MATTY. I told the maid to buy me a penny ball, and I roll it under the bed every night ; I have my hand on the bell rope ready to pull it and call out John, Harry, as if I expected men-servants to answer my ring ; that is in case the ball does not come out.

(Miss Barker removes the tea things.)

MISS POLE. Are we to play ' Preference ' ? If so, how shall we manage ?

MISS BARKER. There are six—two must play cribbage.

MISS SMITH. I would rather not play, for one.

MRS. JAMIESON. *(Snoring.)* Kha ! kha !

MISS BARKER. It is very gratifying to me, very gratifying indeed, to see how completely Mrs. Jamieson feels at home in my poor little dwelling ; she could not have paid me a greater compliment. That makes four of us. Miss Smith, you would like some literature. *(She fetches some fashion books—hands them to Miss Smith : the four sit down to cards.)*

MISS SMITH. Thank you so much.

(The table becomes audible occasionally, and each time)—

MISS BARKER. Hush, ladies ! If you please, hush ! Mrs. Jamieson is asleep.

(Mrs. Forrester is deaf, and has to strain to hear. The ladies move their lips very much when whispering.)

(Enter Peggy with a tray.)

MISS BARKER. Why, Peggy, what have you brought us? Oysters, jelly, little Cupids. (*The game stops, Miss Barker and Peggy help the guests.*) A glass of cherry-brandy? (*Mrs. Jamieson wakes.*)

ALL. Ahem!—er—no—thanks.

MISS BARKER. Just a leetle glass, ladies; with the oysters and lobster, you know. Shell fish are sometimes thought not very wholesome. (*All the ladies continue to shake their heads.*) Mrs. Jamieson, will you not allow me to persuade you?

MRS. JAMIESON. Well, then——

(*Miss Barker fills all the glasses, and hands them: all cough as they drink.*)

MISS POLE. It's very strong. (*Puts down empty glass.*) I do believe there's spirit in it.

MISS BARKER. Only a little drop—just necessary to make it keep. You know, we put brandy papers over preserves to make them keep. I often feel tipsy myself from eating damson tart.

MRS. JAMIESON. My sister-in-law, Lady Glenmire, is coming to stay with me.

ALL. Indeed.

(*Knock. Enter Peggy.*)

PEGGY. Mrs. Jamieson's chair.

MRS. JAMIESON. Tell them to wait in the passage. (*Exeunt Miss Barker and Mrs. Jamieson to robe.*)

MISS SMITH. (*In a subdued tone.*) Who is Lady Glenmire?

MISS MATTY. Oh! she's the widow of Mr. Jamieson's,—that's Mrs. Jamieson's late husband, you know—widow of his eldest brother.

MISS POLE. By the way, you'll think I am strangely ignorant, Miss Matty, but, do you know, I am puzzled

how we ought to address her. Do you say ' your ladyship ', where you would say ' you ' to a common person ? Now, you knew Lady Arley—will you kindly tell me the correct way of speaking to the Peerage ?

MISS MATTY. It's so long ago ! Dear ! dear ! how stupid I am. I don't think—— I know we used to call Sir Peter ' Sir Peter ', but——

(Re-enter Mrs. Jamieson and Miss Barker as Peggy comes in to announce—)

PEGGY. The maids with lanterns.

MISS BARKER. Will you go, Peggy, and show the way, while I escort Mrs. Jamieson ? *(Exeunt—Miss Barker and Mrs. Jamieson one way, the rest, headed by Peggy, the other.)*

CURTAIN.

HANDY ANDY

CHARACTERS

HANDY ANDY, *a Servant*
THE POSTMASTER

MR. DURFY
CUSTOMERS

SCENE

The post office and general store of the village of Ballysloughguttery. The POSTMASTER is serving customers. Enter HANDY ANDY.

ANDY. *(Walking to the counter.)* I want a letter, sir, if you please.

POSTMASTER. *(Importantly.)* Who do you want it for ?

ANDY. *(Repeating his request.)* I want a letter, sir, if you please.

POSTMASTER. And who do you want it for ?

ANDY. What's that to you ?

POSTMASTER. (*Laughing.*) I cannot tell what letter to give you, unless you tell me the direction.

ANDY. The directions I got was to get a letter, here—that 's the directions.

POSTMASTER. Who gave you those directions ?

ANDY. The master.

POSTMASTER. And who 's your master ?

ANDY. What consarn is that of yours ?

POSTMASTER. Why, you stupid rascal ! If you don't tell me his name, how can I give you a letter ?

ANDY. You could if you liked ; but you're fond of axin' impident questions, bekase you think I'm simple.

POSTMASTER. Go along out o' this ! Your master must be as great a goose as yourself, to send such a messenger.

ANDY. Bad luck to your impidence ! Is it Squire Egan you dare to say goose to ?

POSTMASTER. Oh, Squire Egan 's your master, then ?

ANDY. Yis ; have you anything to say agin it ?

POSTMASTER. Only that I never saw you before.

ANDY. Faith, then you'll never see me agin if I have my own consent.

POSTMASTER. I won't give you any letter for the Squire unless I know you're his servant. Is there any one in the town knows you ?

ANDY. Plenty ; it 's not every one is as ignorant as you.

(*Enter Mr. Durfy.*)

ANDY. (*Looking round.*) Here 's one thin !

POSTMASTER. (*To Durfy.*) Do you know if this fellow is a servant of Squire Egan's ?

DURFY. Yes, I've seen him there often.

ANDY. There, didn't I tell you ?

POSTMASTER. It'll be safe to give him a letter ?

DURFY. Yes, I should think so.—Have you one for me ?

POSTMASTER. Yes, sir (*He produces one*), fourpence.

DURFY. (*Paying for it.*) Thank you. (*Exit.*)

POSTMASTER. Here 's a letter for the squire. You've to pay me elevenpence postage.

ANDY. What 'ud I pay elevenpence for ?

POSTMASTER. For postage.

ANDY. Away wid you ! Didn't I see you give Mr. Durfy a letter for fourpence this minit, and a bigger letther than this ? and now you want me to pay elevenpence for this scrap of a thing. Do you think I'm a fool ?

POSTMASTER. No, but I'm sure of it.

ANDY. Well, you're welkim to be sure, sure ; but don't be delayin' me now ; here 's fourpence for you, and gi' me the letther.

POSTMASTER. Go along, you stupid thief. (*He turns to another customer who has entered.*)

CUSTOMER. I want a mouse-trap, please.

POSTMASTER. Yes, sir.

(Several customers are served. Andy keeps walking up and down, coming to the counter at intervals and pushing aside the customers to say : ' Will you gi' me the letther ? ' At each request the Postmaster gets more and more cross and calls him sundry names. At length—)

ANDY. (*To himself.*) I can't get what is right for my master.—I'll not give more than fourpence.—I'd better go and tell him. (*Exit.*)

POSTMASTER. Is that madman gone ?

CURTAIN. *Interval of half an hour.*

(Re-enter Andy in a hurry, finds the shop full, but pushes his way through.)

ANDY. I'm come for that letther.

POSTMASTER. I'll attend to you by and by.

ANDY. The masther 's in a hurry.

POSTMASTER. Let him wait till his hurry 's over.

ANDY. He'll murther me if I'm not back soon.

POSTMASTER. I'm glad to hear it.

(*Andy sees a pile of letters on the counter ; while the Postmaster is not looking he takes two and puts them in his pocket.*)

POSTMASTER. (*After an interval.*) Here 's the letter.

ANDY. (*Paying.*) There 's the elevenpence. (*Aside.*) Well ! if you do make me pay elevenpence, I've got his honour the worth of his money, anyhow !

CURTAIN.

DISCOMFORTING A DANDY

CHARACTERS

SQUIRE EGAN, *of Merryvale House*

MR. FURLONG, *an Election Agent from Dublin*

DICK DAWSON, *brother to Mrs. Egan*

MR. MURPHY, *a Country Lawyer*

MRS. EGAN, *wife of the Squire*

MR. BERMINGHAM, *a Clergyman*

FANNY DAWSON, *Mrs. Egan's sister*

SCENE I

The dining-room of Merryvale House. After dinner, the Squire and Dick Dawson at wine. Enter SERVANT announcing Mr. FURLONG.

EGAN. Happy to see you, Mr. Furlong ; you seem fatigued.

FURLONG. Vewy !

EGAN. Ring the bell for more claret, Dick.

FURLONG. I neveh dwink.

EGAN. A cool bottle wouldn't do a child any harm. Ring, Dick. (*Dick rings.*) And now, Mr. Furlong, tell us how you like the country.

FURLONG. Not much, I pwotest.

EGAN. What do you think of the people ?

(*Servant enters, sets on wine, and exit.*)

FURLONG. Oh, I don't know ; you'll pardon me, but—
a—in short, there are so many wags.

DICK. Oh, there are wags enough, I grant.

FURLONG. But I mean wags—tatters, I mean.

DICK. Oh, rags. Oh yes—why indeed, they've not much
clothes to spare.

FURLONG. And yet these wetches are fweeholders,
I'm told.

EGAN. Aye, and stout voters, too.

FURLONG. Well, that 's all we wequire. By the bye,
how goes the canvass, squire ?

EGAN. Famously.

FURLONG. Oh, wait till I explain to you our plan of
opewations from head-qwaters. You'll see how famously
we shall wally at the hustings. These Iwish have no idea
of tactics : we'll intwoduce the English mode—take them
by surpwise. We must unseat him.

EGAN. Unseat who ?

FURLONG. That—a—Egan, I think you call him.

(*The Squire starts, and opens his eyes. Dick at once
sees what has happened, and makes a signal to the
Squire to keep quiet.*)

DICK. Egan will be unseated to a certainty. Come sir
(*To Furlong*), fill one bumper to the toast I propose—
Here 's confusion to Egan, and success to O'Grady.

FURLONG. Success to O'Gwady. These Iwish are so
wild—so uncultivated. You'll see how I'll surpwise them
with some of my plans.

DICK. Oh, they're poor ignorant brutes, that know
nothing ; a man of the world like you would buy and sell
them.

FURLONG. You see they've no finesse ; they have

a certain degwee of weadiness, but no depth—no weal finesse.

DICK. Oh, we've plenty o' queer fellows here. But you are not taking your claret.

FURLONG. The twuth is, I am fatigued, vewy—and if you'd allow me, Mr. O'Gwady, I should like to go to my woom ; we'll talk over business to-mowow.

EGAN. Certainly.

DICK. (*Rising.*) Come along, Mr. Furlong. (*Exeunt Dick and Furlong ; the former returns in a minute or two, seats himself and bursts out laughing ; the Squire joins in.*)

EGAN. What shall we do with him, Dick ?

DICK. Pump him dry as a lime-kiln, and then send him to O'Grady—all 's fair in war.

EGAN. To be sure. Unseat me, indeed ! he was near it, sure enough, for I thought I'd have dropped off my chair with surprise when he said it.

DICK. And the conceit and impudence of the fellow ! The ignorant Iwish—nothing will serve him but abusing his own countrymen ! The ignorant Irish—oh, is that all you learned in Oxford, my boy ?—just wait, my buck—if I don't astonish your weak mind, it 's no matter !

EGAN. Is it fair, Dick, do you think ?

DICK. Fair ! Why, who ever heard of any one questioning anything being fair in love, war, or electioneering ? To be sure it 's fair—and more particularly when the conceited coxcomb has been telling us how he'll astonish with his plans the poor ignorant Irish, whom he holds in such contempt. Now let me alone, and I'll get all his plans out of him—turn him inside out like a glove, pump him as dry as a pond in the summer—and let him see whether the poor ignorant Iwish, as he softly calls us, are not an overmatch for him.

EGAN. Egad ! I believe you're right, Dick.

CURTAIN.

SCENE II

The same, next day. Dinner is just commencing.

FURLONG. Now, Mr. O'Gwady, had we not better talk over our election business ?

MURPHY. Oh ! hang business.

FURLONG. What do you say, Mr. O'Gwady ?

EGAN. 'Faith, I think we might as well amuse ourselves.

FURLONG. But the election is weally of such consequence ; I should think it would be a wema'kbly close contest ; and we have no time to lose, I should think—with submission.

MURPHY. My dear sir, we'll beat them hollow ; our canvass has been most prosperous ; there's only one thing I'm afraid of——

FURLONG. What is that ?

MURPHY. That Egan has money ; and I'm afraid he'll bribe high.

FURLONG. (*Nodding wisely and winking.*) As for bwibewy, neve' mind that. We'll spend money too. We're pwepared for that ; plenty of money will be advanced, for the gov'nment is weally anxious that you' Mr. Scatte'bwain should come in.

MURPHY. Oh then, all's right. But—(*in an undertone*)—Mr. Furlong—be cautious how you mention money ; the wind of the word might unseat our man on petition.

FURLONG. Oh, let me alone ! I know a twick too many for that ; let them catch me betwaying a secwet ! No, no—wather too sharp for that.

MURPHY. Oh ! don't suppose, my dear sir, that I doubt your caution for a moment. But at the same time don't be angry with me for just hinting to you that some of the Irish chaps are rogues.

FURLONG. Now suppose befo'e the opening of the poll we should pwopose, as it were, with a view to save time,

that the bwibewy oath should not be administe'd on either side.

MURPHY. That 's an elegant idea. You're a janius, Mr. Furlong, and I admire you.

FURLONG. Oh, you flatte' me, weally.

(A knock heard without.)

MRS. EGAN. Did you invite any one to dinner, my dear ?

EGAN. No, my dear. Did you, Dick ?

DICK. No. *(Rises)* I'll go and see who it is.

(The family exchange glances. Enter Servant followed by Mr. Bermingham.)

SERVANT. Mr. Bermingham.

MR. BERMINGHAM. My dear Mrs. Egan, how do you do ? Took a friend's privilege, you see, and have come unbidden to claim the hospitality of your table.

(He sits down at the table.)

FURLONG. *(To Fanny.)* Did he not address Madame as Mistwess Egan ?

FANNY. *(Lisping intentionally.)* Yeth. But *(Whispering)* you muthn't mind him—heth mad, poor man ! that is, a little inthane, and thinkth every lady is Mrs. Egan—but quite harmleth.

FURLONG. Oh ! How vewy wed Mrs. O'Gwady gwew.

FANNY. Oh, thhe can't help bluthhing, poor thowl ! when he thays Mrs. Egan.

FURLONG. How vewy wediculous, to be sure.

MR. BERMINGHAM. At last I have opened my new church ; I preached in it last Sunday.

FURLONG. *(To Fanny.)* Suwely they would not pe'mit an insane cle'gyman to pweach ?

FANNY. Oh, he only thinkth heth a clergyman.

FURLONG. Oh, Miste' O'Gwady, we saw them going to ddown a man to-day.

(Bermingham stares ; the Squire blushes.)

EGAN. *(Hurriedly.)* Some wine, Mr. Furlong.

FURLONG. Thank you. But do they often drown people here ?

EGAN. Not that I know of.

MR. BERMINGHAM. Talking of drowning, I heard a very odd story to-day from O'Grady. You and he are not on very good terms, I believe. (*Furlong stares ; Murphy coughs ; Mrs. Egan looks down, and the Squire fidgets.*) 'Tis a very strange affair. A gentleman who was expected from Dublin last night at Neck-or-Nothing Hall arrived at the village, and thence took a post-chaise, since when he has not been heard of ; and as a post-chaise was discovered this morning sunk in the river, it is suspected the gentleman has been drowned either by accident or design——

FURLONG. Why, sir, that must be me.

MR. BERMINGHAM. You, sir !

FURLONG. Yes, sir. I took a post-chaise at the village last night—and I'm an office' of the gove'ment.

MR. BERMINGHAM. But you're not drowned, sir, and he was.

FURLONG. To be sure I'm not drowned ; but I'm the pe'son.

MR. BERMINGHAM. Quite impossible, sir ; you can't be the person.

FURLONG. Why, sir, do you expect to pe'swade me out of my own identity ?

MR. BERMINGHAM. Allow me, sir, for a moment to explain to you. You see, it could not be you, for the gentleman was going to O'Grady's.

FURLONG. Well, sir, and here I am.

(*Fanny catches Mr. Bermingham's eye, taps her forehead, and shakes her head.*)

MR. BERMINGHAM. Oh, I beg pardon, sir. I see it's a mistake of mine.

FURLONG. There certainly is a vewy gweat mistake somewhere. (*To Egan.*) Pway Miste' O'Gwady, that is,

if you are Miste' O'Gwady—will you tell me if you are Miste' O'Gwady?

EGAN. Sir, you have chosen to call me O'Grady ever since you came here—but my name is Egan.

FURLONG. What! The member for the county?

EGAN. (*Laughing.*) Yes. Do you want a frank?

DICK. 'Twill save your friends postage, when you write to them to say you're safe.

FURLONG. Miste' Wegan, I conside' myself vewy ill-used.

MURPHY. You're the first man I ever heard of being ill-used in Merryvale House.

FURLONG. Sir, it is a gwevous w'ong.

MR. BERMINGHAM. What is this all about?

(*The whole table bursts into roars of laughter.*)

EGAN. My dear friend, this gentleman came to my house last night, and I took him for a visitor whom I have been expecting for some days. He thought, it appears, this was Neck-or-Nothing Hall, and thus a mutual mistake has risen. All I can say is that you are most welcome, Mr. Furlong, to the hospitality of this house as long as you please.

FURLONG. But, sir, you should not have allowed me to wemain in you' house.

EGAN. That 's a doctrine in which you will find it difficult to make an Irish host coincide.

FURLONG. But you must have known, sir, that it was not my intention to come to you' house.

EGAN. How could I know that, sir?

FURLONG. Why, Miste' Wegan—you know—that is—in fact—hang it, sir (*in a rage*) you know I told you all about our electioneering tactics. (*The whole table roars again.*) Well, sir, I pwotest it is extwemely unfair.

DICK. You know, my dear sir, we Irish are such poor ignorant creatures, according to your own account, that

we can make no use of the knowledge with which you have so generously supplied us.

EGAN. You know we have no real finesse.

FURLONG. Sir, there is a certain finesse that is fair, and another that is unfair—and I pwotest against——

MURPHY. Pooh! Pooh! Never mind trifles. Just wait till to-morrow, and I'll——

FURLONG. Sir, no consideration would make me wemain anothe' wower in this house. As soon, Miste' Wegan, as you can tell me how I can get to the house to which I intended to go, I will be weady to bid you good evening.

EGAN. If you are determined, Mr. Furlong, to remain here no longer, I shall not press my hospitality upon you; whenever you decide on going, my carriage shall be at your service.

FURLONG. The soone' the bette', sir.

EGAN. Dick, ring the bell. Pass the claret, Murphy. (*Enter Servant.*) Order the carriage at once.

SERVANT. Yes, sir. (*Exit.*)

EGAN. Will you not have some more wine before you go?

FURLONG. No, thank you, Miste' Wegan, after being twicked in the manner that a——

EGAN. Mr. Furlong, you have said quite enough about that. When you came into my house last night, I had no intention of practising any joke upon you. But you vaunted your own superior intelligence and finesse over us, sir, and told us you came down to overthrow poor Pat in the trickery of electioneering movements. Under those circumstances, sir, I think what we have done is quite fair. We have shown you that you are no match for us in the finesse upon which you pride yourself so much. Good evening, Mr. Furlong; I hope we part without owing each other any ill-will. (*He offers to shake hands.*)

FURLONG. (*Drawing himself up.*) Weally—er—I must say—er—atwocious——

DICK. What's that you say? You don't speak very plain, and I'd like to be sure of the last word you used.

FURLONG. I mean to say that a——

DICK. I tell you this, Mr. Furlong, all that has been done is my doing. I've humbugged you, sir, humbugged. I've sold you dead. I've pumped you, sir—all your electioneering bag of tricks. And now go off to O'Grady, and tell him how the poor ignorant Irish have done you.

CURTAIN.

A FAMILY DISCUSSION

CHARACTERS

MR. TULLIVER

MR. DEANE

MR. GLEGG

MR. PULLET

MRS. TULLIVER

MRS. GLEGG

MRS. DEANE

MRS. PULLET

} *Sisters, wives of the above-named gentlemen*

SCENE

The parlour of Mr. Tulliver's farm-house. MR. and MRS.

TULLIVER, MR. and MRS. GLEGG, MR. and MRS. DEANE, MR. and MRS. PULLET discovered seated.

MRS. TULLIVER. Mr. Tulliver, it's time now to tell the children's aunts and uncles what you are thinking of doing with Tom, isn't it?

TULLIVER. Very well; I've no objections to tell anybody what I mean to do with him. I've settled to send him to a Mr. Stelling, a parson, down at Kings Lorton, there—an uncommon clever fellow, I understand—as'll put him up to most things.

(General movement of surprise.)

PULLET. Why, what can you be going to send him to a parson for? *(He looks at Glegg and Deane.)*

TULLIVER. Why, because the parsons are the best schoolmasters, by what I can make out. Jacobs at th'academy's no parson, and he's done very bad by the boy; and I made up my mind, if I sent him to school again, it should be to somebody different from Jacobs. And this Mr. Stelling, by what I can make out, is the sort of man I want. And I mean my boy to go to him at Midsummer. (*He takes snuff.*)

DEANE. (*Copying him.*) You'll have to pay a swinging half-yearly bill, then, eh, Tulliver?

GLEGG. What! do you think the parson'll teach him to know a good sample o' wheat when he sees it, neighbour Tulliver?

TULLIVER. Why, you see, I've got a plan in my head about Tom.

MRS. GLEGG. Well, if I may be allowed to speak, and it's seldom as I am, I should like to know what good is to come to the boy, by bringing him up above his fortune.

TULLIVER. (*Looking at the men.*) Why, you see, I've made up my mind not to bring Tom up to my own business. I've had my thoughts about it all along. I mean to put him to some business as he can go into without capital, and I want to give him an eddication as he'll be even wi' the lawyers and folk, and put me up to a notion now and then.

MRS. GLEGG. It 'ud be a fine deal better for some people, if they'd let the lawyers alone.

DEANE. Is he at the head of a grammar-school, then, this clergyman—such as that at Market Bewley?

TULLIVER. No—nothing o' that. He won't take more than two or three pupils—and so he'll have the more time to attend to 'em, you know.

PULLET. Ah, and get his eddication done the sooner; they can't learn much at a time when there's so many of 'em.

GLEGG. But he'll want the more pay, I doubt.

TULLIVER. Aye, aye, a cool hundred, that 's all. But then, you know, it 's an investment ; Tom's eddication 'll be so much capital to him.

GLEGG. Aye, there 's something in that ; well, well, neighbour Tulliver, you may be right, you may be right.

When land is gone and money spent
Then learning is most excellent.

I remember seeing those two lines wrote on a window at Buxton. But us that have got no learning had better keep our money, eh, neighbour Pullet ?

MRS. GLEGG. Mr. Glegg, I wonder *at* you. It 's very unbecoming in a man of your age and belongings.

GLEGG. What 's unbecoming, Mrs. Glegg. (*He winks at the company.*) My new blue coat as I've got on ?

MRS. GLEGG. I pity your weakness, Mr. Glegg. I say it 's unbecoming to make a joke when you see your own kin going headlongs to ruin.

TULLIVER. (*Nettled.*) If you mean me by that, you needn't trouble yourself to fret about me. I can manage my own affairs without troubling other folk.

DEANE. (*Trying to smooth things over.*) Bless me ! why, now I come to think of it, somebody said Wakem was going to send *his* son—the deformed lad—to a clergyman—didn't they, Susan ? (*To his wife.*)

MRS. DEANE. I can give no account of it, I'm sure.

TULLIVER. Well, if Wakem thinks o' sending his son to a clergyman, depend on it I shall make no mistake i' sending Tom to one. Wakem knows the length of every man's foot he 's got to deal with.

MRS. PULLET. But Lawyer Wakem's son 's got a hump-back ; it 's more natural to send him to a clergyman.

GLEGG. Yes, you must consider that, neighbour Tulliver . Wakem's son isn't likely to follow any business. Wakem'll make a gentleman of him, poor fellow.

MRS. GLEGG. Mr. Glegg, you'd far better hold your tongue. Mr. Tulliver doesn't want to know your opinion nor mine neither. There 's folks in the world as knows better than everybody else.

TULLIVER. Why, I should think that 's you, if we're to trust your own tale.

MRS. GLEGG. (*Sarcastically.*) Oh, *I* say nothing. My advice has never been asked, and I don't give it.

TULLIVER. It'll be the first time then. It 's the only thing you're over-ready at giving.

MRS. GLEGG. I've been over-ready at lending, then ; if I haven't been over-ready at giving. There 's folks I've lent money to, as perhaps I shall repent o' lending money to kin.

GLEGG. Come, come, come.

TULLIVER. You've got a bond for it, I reckon, and you've had your five per cent., kin or no kin.

MRS. TULLIVER. (*Pleadingly.*) Sister, drink your wine, and let me give you some almonds and raisins.

MRS. GLEGG. Bessy, I'm sorry for you ; it's poor work talking o' almonds and raisins.

MRS. PULLET. (*Whimpering.*) Lors, sister Glegg, don't be so quarrelsome. You may be struck with a fit, getting so red in the face after dinner, and we are but just out of mourning, all of us—and all wi' gowns craped alike and put by—it 's very bad among sisters.

MRS. GLEGG. I should think it *is* bad. Things are come to a fine pass when one sister invites the other to her house o' purpose to quarrel with her and abuse her.

GLEGG. Softly, softly, Jane—be reasonable, be reasonable.

TULLIVER. Who wants to quarrel with you ? It 's you as can't leave people alone, but must be gnawing at 'em for ever. *I* should niver want to quarrel with any woman if she kept her place.

MRS. GLEGG. My place, indeed ! There 's your betters, Mr. Tulliver, as are dead and in their grave, treated me with a different sort o' respect to what you do—*though* I've got a husband as'll sit by and see me abused by them as 'ud never ha' had the chance if there hadn't been them in our family as married worse than they might ha' done.

TULLIVER. If you talk o' that, my family 's as good as yours—and better, for it hasn't got an ill-tempered woman in it.

MRS. GLEGG. (*Rising.*) Well, I don't know whether you think it 's a fine thing to sit by and hear me insulted, Mr. Glegg ; but I'm not going to stay a minute longer in this house. You can stay behind, and come home with the gig, and I'll walk home. (*Exit.*)

GLEGG. Dear heart, dear heart ! (*Exit.*)

MRS. TULLIVER. Mr. Tulliver, how could you talk so ?

TULLIVER. Let her go, and the sooner the better ; she won't be trying to domineer over *me* again in a hurry.

MRS. TULLIVER. Sister Pullet, do you think it 'ud be any use for you to go after her and try to pacify her ?

DEANE. Better not, better not, you'll make it up another day.

MRS. TULLIVER. Then, sisters, shall we go and look at the children ? (*Exeunt the ladies.*)

CURTAIN.

A MISER'S LOSS

CHARACTERS

SNELL, *Landlord of the 'Rainbow'*
 BOB, *A Butcher*
 DOWLAS, *A Farrier and Veterinary Surgeon*
 MACEY, *A Tailor and Parish Clerk*
 TOOKEY, *his Assistant*
 WINTHROP, *A Wheelwright*
 SILAS MARNER, *A Miserly Weaver*
 JEM RODNEY

SCENE

The kitchen of the 'Rainbow', the Inn of Raveloe. The company seated in old-fashioned chairs.

SNELL. Some folks 'ud say that was a fine beast you druv in yesterday, Bob.

BOB. And they wouldn't be far wrong.

DOWLAS. Was it a red Durham?

BOB. Red it was, and a Durham it was.

DOWLAS. Then you needn't tell *me* who you bought it of. I know who it is has got the red Durhams of this country-side. And she'd a white star on her brow, I'll bet a penny.

BOB. Well; yes, she might; I don't say contrairy.

DOWLAS. I knew that well. If I don't know Mr. Lam-meter's cows, I should like to know who does—that's all. And as for the cow you've bought, bargain or no bargain, I've been at the drenching of her—contradick me who will.

BOB. I'm not for contradicking no man, I'm for peace and quietness. Some are for cutting long ribs—I'm for cutting 'em short myself, but *I* don't quarrel with 'em. All I say is, it's a lovely carcass.

DOWLAS. Well, it's the cow I drenched, whatever it

is, and it was Mr. Lammeter's cow, else you told a lie when you said it was a red Durham.

BOB. I tell no lies, and I contradick none—not if a man was to swear himself black; he's no meat of mine. All I say is, it's a lovely carcass. And what I say I'll stick to, but I'll quarrel wi' no man.

DOWLAS. (*Sarcastically.*) No, and p'raps you ain't pig-headed; and p'raps you didn't say the cow was a red Durham; and p'raps you didn't say she'd got a star on the brow; stick to that, now you're at it.

SNELL. Come, come, let the cow alone. The truth lies between you; you're both right and both wrong, as I allays says. And as for the cow's being Mr. Lammeter's, I say nothing to that; but this I say, as the Rainbow's the Rainbow. And for the matter o' that, if the talk is to be o' the Lammeters (*turning to Mr. Macey*) you know the most upo' that head, eh, Mr. Macey?

MACEY. (*Smiling in pity.*) Aye, aye, I know, I know; but I let other folk talk. I've laid by now, and give up to the young'uns. Ask them as have been to school at Tarley; they've learnt pernouncing; that's come up since my day.

TOOKEY. If you're pointing at me, Mr. Macey, I'm nowise a man to speak out of my place. As the psalm says—

I know what 's right, nor only so,
But also practise what I know.

WINTHROP. Well, then, I wish you'd keep hold o' the tune, when it's set for you; if you're for practising, I wish you'd practise that.

TOOKEY. Mr. Winthrop, if you'll bring me any proof as I'm in the wrong, I'm not the man to say I won't alter. But there's people set up their own ears for a standard, and expect the whole choir to follow 'em. There may be two opinions, I hope.

MACEY. Aye, aye, you're right there, Tookey, there's allays two 'pinions. There'd be two 'pinions about a cracked bell, if the bell could hear itself.

TOOKEY. Well, Mr. Macey, I undertook to partially fill up the office of parish-clerk, whenever your infirmities should make you unfitting and it's one of the rights thereof to sing in the choir—else why have you done the same yourself?

WINTHROP. Ah! but the old gentleman and you are two folks. The old gentleman's got a gift. Why, the Squire used to invite him to take a glass, only to hear him sing the 'Red Rovier', didn't he, Mr. Macey? But as for you, Mr. Tookey, you'd better stick to your 'Amens'; your voice is well enough when you keep it up in your nose. It's your inside as isn't right made for music; it's no better than a hollow stalk.

TOOKEY. I see what it is plain enough. There's a conspiracy to turn me out o' the choir, as I shouldn't share the Christmas money—that's where it is.

WINTHROP. Nay, nay, Tookey, we'll pay you your share to keep out of it—that's what we'll do. (*General laughter.*)

SNELL. Come, come, a joke's a joke. We're all good friends here, I hope. We must give and take. You're both right and both wrong, as I say. I agree wi' Mr. Macey here, as there's two opinions; and if mine was asked, I should say they're both right.

BOB. To be sure, we're fond of our old clerk; it's natural, and him used to be such a singer, and got a brother as is known for the first fiddler in this country-side. Eh, it's a pity but what Soloman lived in our village, eh, Mr. Macey?

MACEY. Aye, aye, our family's been known for musicianers as far back as anybody can tell. But them things are dying out; there's no voices like what there used to be.

SNELL. Aye, you remember when first Mr. Lammeter's father came into these parts, don't you, Mr. Macey?

MACEY. I should think I did.

SNELL. Old Mr. Lammeter had a pretty fortin, didn't they say, when he came into these parts?

MACEY. Well, yes; but I daresay it's as much as this Mr. Lammeter's done to keep it whole. For there was allays a talk as nobody could get rich on the Warrens; though he holds it cheap, for it's what they call Charity Land.

BOB. Aye, and there's few folks know so well as you how it come to be Charity Land, eh, Mr. Macey?

MACEY. How should they? Why, my grandfather made the groom's livery for the Mr. Cliff as came and built the big stables at the Warrens. A Lunnon tailor, some folks said, as had gone mad wi' cheating. He got queerer nor ever, and they said he used to go out i' the dead o' the night, wi' a lantern in his hand, to the stables, and set a lot o' lights burning. At last he died, and left all his property to a London Charity, and that's how the Warrens come to be Charity Land.

SNELL. Aye, but there's more going on in the stables than what folks see by daylight, eh, Mr. Macey?

MACEY. Aye, aye, go that way of a dark night, that's all (*Mysteriously*), and then make believe, if you like, as you didn't see lights i' the stables, nor hear the stamping o' the hosses, and howling, too, if it's tow'rt daybreak.

SNELL. What do you say to that, Dowlas? There's a nut for you to crack.

DOWLAS. Say? I say what a man should say as doesn't shut his eyes to look at a sign-post. I say as I'm ready to wager any man ten pounds, if he'll stand out wi' me any dry night in the pasture before the Warren stables, as we shall neither see lights nor hear noises.

WINTHROP. Why, Dowlas, that's easy betting, that is.

Folks as believe in it aren't a-going to venture near it for a matter o' ten pounds.

MACEY. If Master Dowlas wants to know the truth of it—let him go and stan' by himself—there's nobody 'ull hinder him.

DOWLAS. Thank you! I'm obliged to you. I don't want to make out the truth about ghos'es; I know it already.

SNELL. Aye, but there's this in it, Dowlas. There's folks, i' my opinion, they can't see ghos'es, not if they stood as plain as a pike-staff before them. And there's reason i' that. For there's my wife, now, can't smell, not if she'd the strongest o' cheese under her nose. I never see'd a ghost myself; but then I says to myself, 'Very like I haven't got the smell for them'. And so, I'm for holding with both sides.

DOWLAS. Tut, tut, what's smell got to do with it? Did ever a ghost give a man a black eye? If ghos'es want me to believe in 'em, let 'em leave off skulking i' the dark and i' lone places—

MACEY. As if ghos'es 'ud want to be believed in by anybody so ignirant!

*(Enter Silas Marner unheard. The company sees him—
a dead silence, broken only by the hard breathing of
the new-comer.)*

SNELL. Master Marner, what's lacking to you? What's your business here?

MARNER. Robbed! I've been robbed! I want the constable—and the Justice—

SNELL. Lay hold on him, Jem Rodney, he's off his head I doubt. He's wet through.

RODNEY. Come and lay hold of him yourself, Mr. Snell, if you've a mind. He's been robbed, and *(muttering)* murdered too, for what I know.

MARNER. Jem Rodney !

RODNEY. Aye, Master Marner, what do you want wi' me? (*He trembles and lifts up his drinking-mug as if to defend himself with it.*)

MARNER. (*Clasping his hands in entreaty.*) If it was you stole my money, give it me back—and I won't meddle with you. I won't set the constable on you. Give it me back, and I'll let you—I'll let you have a guinea.

RODNEY. Me stole your money ! I'll pitch this can at your eye if you talk o' *my* stealing your money.

SNELL. Come, come, Master Marner, if you've got any information to lay, speak it out sensible. You're as wet as a drowned rat. Sit down and dry yourself.

CHORUS. Aye, aye, make him sit down.

RODNEY. He'd better not say again as it was me robbed him. What could I ha' done with his money ? I could as easy steal the parson's surplice and wear it.

SNELL. Hold your tongue, Jem, and let 's hear what he 's got to say. Now then, Master.

MARNER. (*To Rodney.*) I was wrong—yes, yes. I ought to have thought. There 's nothing to witness against you, Jem. Only you'd been into my house oftener than anybody else, and so you came into my head. I don't accuse you—I won't accuse anybody, only (*rubbing his head*) I try—I try to think where my guineas can be.

DOWLAS. How much money might there be, Master Marner ?

MARNER. (*With a groan.*) Two hundred and seventy-two pounds twelve and sixpence, last night when I counted it.

DOWLAS. Pooh ! why, they'd be none so heavy to carry. Some tramp 's been in, that 's all. It 's my opinion as, if I'd been you or you'd been me—for it comes to the same thing—you wouldn't have thought you'd found everything as you left it. But what I vote is, as two of the sensiblest o' the company should go with you to Master Kench, the

constable's—he 's ill i' bed, I know that much—and get him to appoint one of us his deppity ; for that 's the law, and I don't think anybody 'ull take upon him to contradick me there. It isn't much of a walk to Kench's ; and then, if it 's me as is deppity, I'll go back with you, Master Marnar, and examine your premises.

SNELL. Let 's see how the night is, though. (*He opens the door.*) Why, it rains heavy, still.

DOWLAS. Well, I'm not the man to be afraid o' the rain ; for it'll look bad when Justice Malam hears as respectable men like us had a information laid before 'em and took no steps.

SNELL. That 's what I say. I'll go to Kench's.

MACEY. But you can't propose yourself as deppity constable, Master Dowlas. I know the law, and I know for a fact, for my father told me, that no doctor can be a constable. And you're a doctor, I reckon, though you're only a cow-doctor—for a fly's a fly, though it may be a hoss-fly.

DOWLAS. A doctor can be a constable if he likes ; the law means he needn't be one if he doesn't like.

MACEY. I call that nonsense ; the law is not likely to be fonder o' doctors than o' other folk. And if doctors by nature don't like to be constable, how come you, Master Dowlas, to be so eager like to be one ?

DOWLAS. I don't want to act the constable ; and there 's no man can say it of me, if he'd tell the truth. But if there 's to be jealousy and envying about going to Kench's in the rain, let them go as like it—you won't get me to go, I can tell you.

SNELL. But you won't refuse, surely, to go as a second person with me ; just as a private person, so to speak, as don't want to act as constable but as accompanies me friendly.

DOWLAS. Hum ! Well, I don't mind, to oblige, you know. Come along, Mr. Marner.

(He rises. Marner follows suit. They pause at the door, looking into the night ; then, pulling up their collars and flattening their hats on their heads, all three plunge out into the night.)

CURTAIN.

CENTRAL CIRCULATION
CHILDREN'S ROOM

